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Awards event
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Amusement industry ready to gather for IAAPA Expo 2019

AT: Pam Sherborne

psherborne@amusementtoday.com

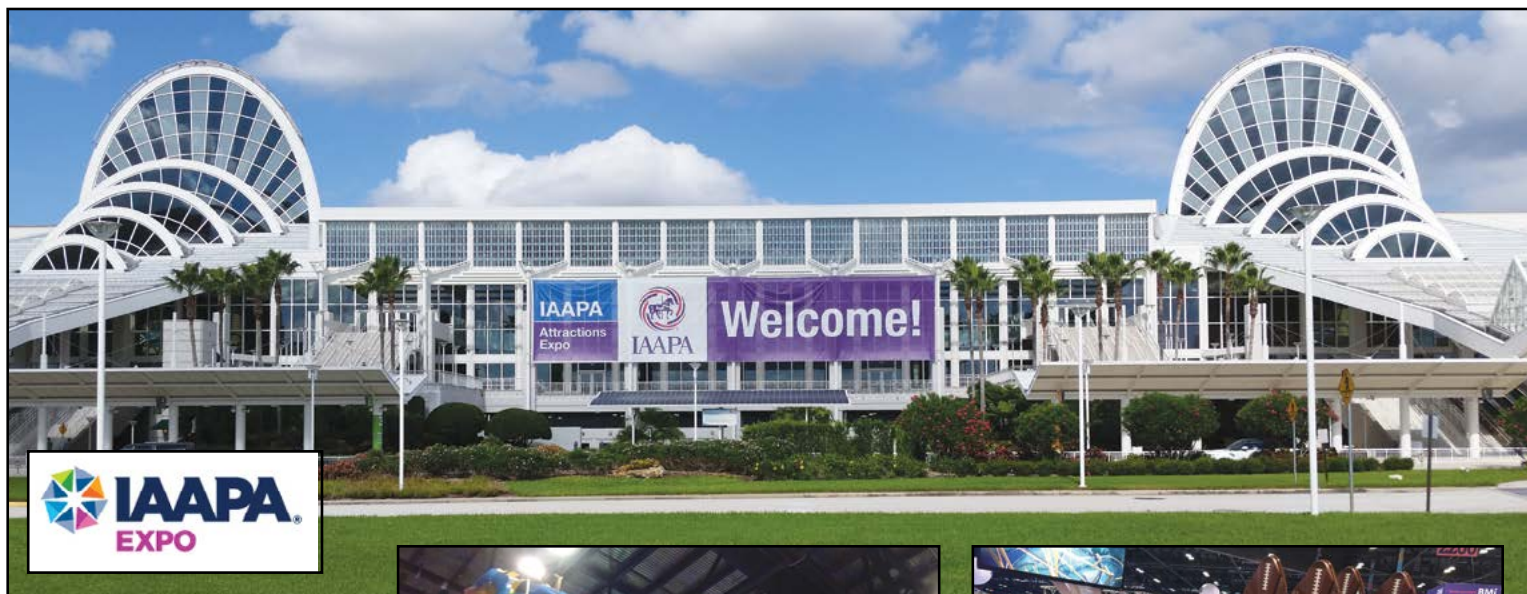
ORLANDO, Fla. — It seems there is no stopping the national and international growth of the amusement industry. And as the industry grows, so does the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)** as it strives to strengthen its resources to benefit its diverse membership.

The association's expos are just one way, albeit a big way, to reach out to members of the industry. Estimated attendance numbers for the upcoming **IAAPA Expo 2019**, set for Nov. 18-22 at the **Orange County Convention Center**, are coming in at 38,000 plus. If early 2019 expo successes — such as **IAAPA Expo Asia 2019**, held June 11-14 in Shanghai, China, and **IAAPA Expo Europe 2019** held Sept. 16-17 in Paris, France, — are indicators of what is to come, it should be easy for the association to reach that goal.

Expo attendees will be representing more than 100 countries as well as the various parts of the attractions industry, including amusement and theme parks, water parks, family entertainment centers, zoos, aquariums, science centers and museums.

In addition, more than 1,000 exhibiting companies are expected on the trade show floor, filling 560,000 net square feet of exhibit space. Exhibitors will display their latest products and services in 125 different categories.

For the second year in a row, Exploration Station, two custom-built structures located adjacent to the convention cen-



The Orange County Convention Center (above) welcomes the return of IAAPA Expo Nov. 18-22. New attractions and media unveilings are among the highlights of the event.

AT/TIM BALDWIN;
JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

ter, will feature more than 100 exhibiting companies.

There will be more than 100 educational experiences on a wide range of topics and exclusive behind-the-scenes educational tours (EDUTours) at Orlando-area attractions.

With so many events planned this year, highlights will abound. But there are a few exceptional events. **Lesley Harris**, IAAPA's manager of global communications, named a few of those. They include Lunch and Learn featuring keynote speaker **George Walker**, creative director, **Universal Creative**, on Monday, Nov. 18; the Opening



Reception on Tuesday, Nov. 19; and the GM and Owners' Breakfast on Wednesday, Nov. 20, featuring **Christine Duffy**, president, **Carnival Cruise Line**.

Two others Harris noted, both set for Thursday, Nov. 21, are Game Changer session by **Vince Kadlubek**, co-founder and CEO, **Meow Wolf**, and IAAPA Celebrates at **Universal's Islands of Adventure**.

As members take advantage of everything going on at IAAPA Expo 2019, some also will be found visiting the new IAAPA headquarters building in Orlando, which is now open. The 22,000-square-foot facility sits on

seven acres of land surrounded by Florida waterways.

The custom-built facility was uniquely designed to celebrate and support IAAPA members from around the world. The building's exterior features a wave pattern that symbolizes the dynamic attractions industry. Inside, artistic elements include varying ceiling heights and a colorful mural.

The facility contains meeting rooms, special event space and workstations. The patio features an outdoor kitchen and ample seating overlooking the natural landscape.

"The headquarters will serve as the place for industry

professionals to come together, to work and to collaborate," said **David Rosenberg**, 2019 chairman of the IAAPA Board of Directors and vice president of **Monterey Bay (California) Aquarium**.

"It also is perfectly positioned to support the association's global operations."

IAAPA employs 73 people worldwide, with close to 50 team members



Rosenberg

► See IAAPA, page 6

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AMUSEMENT VIEWS

AT NOTEBOOK: John W.C. Robinson, jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

What's New?



Robinson

It has to be the number one question we're greeted with all week long during IAAPA Expo. You run into an associate or an old friend and, invariably, one of the first questions out of someone's mouth is "Have you seen anything new?" or "What's new on the show floor?" or "Did you see that new ride in aisle 300?" or some variation of that inquiry.

Of course, there's always something new. There's always something different, something that pushes the boundaries a little.

I've been attending the show long enough to remember when Dippin' Dots made its debut at IAAPA Expo. Promoting itself as "The ice cream of the future," the ultra-cold treat was something everyone was talking about that year. Since then, thanks to the company's free samples, it has become such a staple at the event that it's practically a food group.

At one of my very first IAAPA Expos, Zamperla debuted its Telecombat ride. A single car was on the show floor, and test pilot riders could take a ride and try out the built-in eight-bit video game and imagine themselves battling other riders in flight. It was a ride. It was interactive. And, with a little imagination, it was an early stage of immersion. And it's what was new that year at the show.

The world of the attractions industry has jumped light years since then. In the past month alone, I've walked through a haunted swamp, built a lightsaber and watched it spring to life in my hands, flown the Millennium Falcon and soared alongside an eagle over Washington. I'm soon to take a seat next to Hagrid and confront magical beasts I've only read about.

What was new at the Expo last year? Certainly no one escaped a conversation about S&S-Sansei's drivable car that could transform into a moving robot right before our eyes. The generation that grew up playing with toy versions of Bumblebee and Optimus Prime are now the executives and businesspeople walking the show floor and we get to view what we'd previously only imagined as children (nearly every day after school) come to life right in front of us.

And yet, we all know, there'll be something new at IAAPA Expo this year. We'll pass by a booth at the show and discover something that'll ignite our excitement for just what is possible in this industry and what will bring out the smiles and laughter of guests for the next generation to come.

Asking "What's new?" is continually challenging our industry to push the limits and think outside the box. It's a challenge that not only has our industry continually accepted, but one that IAAPA Expo has continued to showcase.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY OPINION: Dean Lamanna, dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

The walkthrough renaissance

As thoughts turn to IAAPA Expo 2019 and industry innovations awaiting us in 2020, it seems a good time to step back into the original "immersive attraction" — the walkthrough.

Variations on this early amusement park and carnival staple have been satisfying our craving for fun and thrills since at least the turn of the 20th century. Over the decades, random around-the-corner sensations like air jets, tilted rooms, rotating barrels and mirror mazes gave way to more sophisticated and narratively delivered surprises and the expansive storytelling environments created by Disney and others.

The walkthrough as a stand-alone offering waned with the rise of theme parks in the 1970s — largely relegated to holiday-inspired seasonal installations (e.g. Knott's Scary Farm) as higher-tech attractions made the concept seem passé.

In recent years, the walkthrough has resurged in disparate forms that are anything but pedestrian. Reinvigorated not just by fun-seeking but our need for connection and the voracity of social media, it has become a platform not just for diversion and Instagrammable moments but the expression and

ingenuity of artists, writers and engineers.

As growing trade / fan shows including Midsummer Scream (*Amusement Today*, October 2019) and HauntCon (see story, page 56) attest, the business of Halloween mazes and neighborhood haunts has achieved Hollywood-level professionalism and success. Meow Wolf's House of Eternal Return in Santa Fe, New Mexico, has expanded the possibilities

of the art-based multimedia walkthrough experience while traveling pop-ups such as Funbox (see story, page 32) specifically indulge our childhood fantasies. Escape rooms have turned the old funhouse aesthetic into engaging and collaborative games.

Even museum exhibits — see the new Pacific Visions wing at Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California (AT, September 2019) — have taken cues from the genre, increasingly imparting science and messaging with effects and theming.

Walkthroughs are making bold strides. And though we'll never pass up the latest whirling and soaring rides, exploring these three-dimensional compartments of the human imagination at our own pace, on our own power, can be the most rewarding thrill of all.



Lamanna

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the columnist(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.



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2 MINUTE DRILL

Compiled by
Amusement Today staff

Janice Witherow's column
will return next issue.

Amanda Thompson, Blackpool Pleasure Beach

Amanda Thompson has been the managing director of **Blackpool Pleasure Beach** in Blackpool, England, since 2004. The historic amusement property is one of the most visited tourist attractions in the U.K. and has won numerous awards from industry associations. Thompson is the fourth generation of her family to head up the property. Blackpool Pleasure Beach was founded by her great grandfather, **W.G. Bean**, in 1896. Her grandmother, **Doris Bean Thompson**, and grandfather, **Leonard Thompson**, assumed leadership in 1931. Her father, **Geoffrey Thompson**, oversaw the business from 1976 until 2004. She also manages **Stageworks Worldwide Productions**, an entertainment company she founded in 1982 that produces shows globally. She directs and produces with very much a hands-on approach.

Title: Managing Director of Blackpool Pleasure Beach.

Number of years in the industry:

I have worked in the industry since the age of seven.

Best thing about the industry:

The amazing people I have the opportunity to work with.

Favorite amusement park ride:

ICON at Blackpool Pleasure Beach, but I do love the Cars ride at Disney too.

If I weren't working in the industry, I would be ...

Working in TV or Fashion.

Biggest challenge facing the industry:

Sustainability.

The thing I like most about amusement park season is ...

The thrill of being surrounded by happiness.

Favorite kind of snack:

Caviar.

The last concert I went to was ...

My good friend Robbie Williams.

My ideal day off is spent ...

Walking on the beach with my husband, Steve, and our dogs.

The thing I look most forward to at the IAAPA Expo is ...

Sharing experiences with friends in the industry.

Favorite show running in London's Piccadilly Circus ...

Matilda.

Biggest recent splurge:

Our new £12M Boulevard Hotel.



Amanda Thompson's design vision for a new coaster led to the opening of Blackpool's \$18 million-plus Icon in 2019. Manufactured by Mack Rides, it was the U.K.'s first double-launch coaster, soaring to a maximum height of 88 feet and speeds of up to 53 mph.

COURTESY BLACKPOOL PLEASURE BEACH

The one thing I like the best about the city of Blackpool's illuminations light festival is ...

Blackpool Tower when they eventually light it as beautifully as the Eiffel Tower.

My next vacation will be:

Mexico.

My father always told me ...

To always be myself.

Favorite drink in the morning:

My husband Steve freshly squeezes me orange juice every morning.

If I could watch only one TV show, it would be ...

Can I pick three? It would be *Downton Abbey*, *The Night Manager* or *Love Island*.

What part of the day do you feel most creative?

When I am asleep and dreaming.

The song I can't ever seem to get out of my mind is ...

"Utopian."

My childhood ambition was to ...

Be an actor or fashion designer.

THE INDUSTRY SEEN

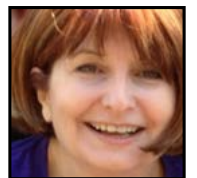
Getting a view of the new HQ



Amusement Today staff in Orlando to attend the World Waterpark Association Trade Show and Symposium, stopped in to see the new IAAPA headquarters, which opened Oct. 2, 2019. From left, John W.C. Robinson, Pam Sherborne, Sue Nichols and Gary Slade toured the new facility alongside IAAPA Global Communications Director Susie Storey. The new headquarters are designed for IAAPA's members, featuring meeting rooms, special event space and workstations. A spacious patio features an outdoor kitchen and ample seating overlooking the natural landscape. In the lobby, a multimedia display showcases some of the organization's rich history.

AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

Reflections ON FUN



AT: Lottie Minick

A whole lotta llama drama

This issue's story comes courtesy of David Kynard, a former assistant operations manager at Six Flags Over Georgia (1970-71). Enjoy!

After the 1971 season, the petting zoo curator at **Six Flags Over Georgia** was fired — leaving me with the not-always-pleasant task of feeding the animals. Rainy weather created a mix of mud and excrement in the zoo, where I had to balance a 100-pound bag of feed on my knee while squeezing through the gate, hoping no creatures escaped.

The attraction featured a large male llama named Sissy. Everyone assumed Sissy had been mistreated before his acquisition because he had a nasty demeanor and spit at people. Or maybe he just hated his name.

One stormy night, after filling the trough with feed, I was struck in the back of the head. The force tossed me over the trough face-down into the mud. Catching my breath, I noticed llama hooves... two next to my shoulders and two next to my waist.

Sissy was in love. And I wasn't sure I would survive.

I managed, somehow, to wriggle away. Utterly filthy, I returned to the office ready to tell the story to my superiors — **Bill Crandall**, park operations manager, and **Errol McKoy**, general manager. But they laughed knowingly the moment they saw me.

Today, I can only picture llamas in exotic burger form. And I will not get close enough to a petting zoo to see the animals through binoculars.

Lottie Minick is a 45-year attractions industry veteran and co-owner of Dallas-based Minick Associates, a design firm founded by her late husband, Bob. Her monthly column features behind-the-scenes anecdotes of her own and from those who have worked in the business. Got a fun industry story? Email lottie@minickassociates.com.

Give Kids The World Village continues partnership with IAAPA

ORLANDO, Fla. — This year marks the 25th anniversary of the partnership between the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)** and **Give Kids the World Village (GKTW)**, a Kissimmee, Florida-based nonprofit that gives comfort and aid to critically ill children and their families.

Each year, IAAPA holds several events during its convention and trade show that directly benefit GKTW. The 2019 events:

- **The 17th Annual IAAPA International Charity Golf Tournament**, starting at 8 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 17, at **Shingle Creek Golf Club** in Orlando. This is a new location, just minutes away from the IAAPA Expo 2019 site at the **Orange County Convention Center**. It is an 18-hole, par-72 course. Registration fee includes golf cart, breakfast and lunch. Golf club rentals are available.

- **IAAPA "Footprints From the Heart" 5K Run/1 Mile Walk**, takes place Thursday morning, Nov. 21, at GKTW Village in Kissimmee, Florida. Participants may register as singles or they may create a team of five or more. Advanced online registration is open until Tuesday, Nov. 19, with on-site registration open at the IAAPA Expo 2019 until 6 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 20. Runners may also register the morning of the event.

- **Annual Motorcycle Ride**, Sunday, Nov. 17 at the **Orlando Harley-Davidson/Eagle Rider**. Motorcycle rental is available.

•gktw.org



IAAPA announces new 2020 board members during IAAPA Expo Europe

PARIS —The following IAAPA members were appointed to serve the association on its board of directors in 2020. The appointees were announced Sept. 16 during the IAAPA Expo Europe 2019.

Second Vice Chair

- Jim Pattison, Jr., ICAE, president of Ripley Entertainment

Facility Member Directors

- Fernando Aldecoa, general manager, PortAventura Entertainment, Spain
- Laura Woodburn, managing director of attractions, Hershey Entertainment and Resorts
- Xavier Lopez Ancona, founder and CEO, KidZania, Mexico
- Tony Sze, group senior counsellor, Chimelong Group Co., Ltd., China

Manufacturer and Supplier Member Director

- Chloe Hausfeld, director, marketing and business development, JRA

Advisory Board Director

- Darrell Metzger, adjunct professor, Singapore Management University, Singapore

EMEA Regional Advisory Committee Chair

- Miikka Seppala, CEO, Särkänniemi, Finland

North America Reg. Advisory Committee Chair

- Ted Molter, chief marketing officer, San Diego Zoo Global

Treasurer

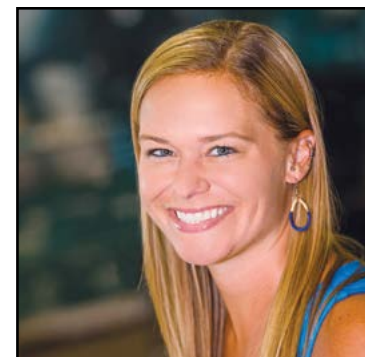
- Curt Caffey, president of water parks division, ProParks Management



Jim Pattison, Jr.



Fernando Aldecoa



Chloe Hausfeld

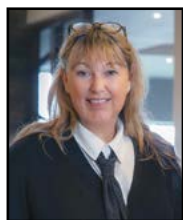
IAAPA Continued from page 1

based in Orlando. The new building is home to the IAAPA North America regional office as well as the association's headquarters team.

During IAAPA Expo 2019, Rosenberg will hand the gavel over to incoming chair **Amanda Thompson OBE, ICAE**, managing director, **Blackpool Pleasure Beach**, Lancashire, U.K.

Jim Pattison, Jr., ICAE, president of **Ripley Entertainment**, headquartered in Orlando, Florida, officially will become the second vice chair. IAAPA announced his appointment Sept. 16 during IAAPA Expo Europe 2019.

Educational sessions, which run Monday-Thursday, Nov. 18-



Thompson

21, will be led by industry professionals who volunteer their time to lend their expertise. Topics to be covered include facility operations, marketing, public relations and communications, entertainment, government relations, security and safety, information technology, food and beverage, merchandise and games, and human resources.

Some specific session titles throughout the week include Staffing Hot Topics, Advocacy for Institutions with Animals in Professional Care, Driving Revenue and Attendance with Themed Events, How Social Media is Changing the Way Guests Eat, 2019 Emerging Trends in Immersive Design, New Voices and Perspectives, Overlooked ADA: Compliance Issues You Might Not Be Thinking About and Corrosion: Combating the Hidden Dangers in Amusement Parks and Attractions.

Several roundtable discussions are offered during the week



Innovations in water park attractions as well as virtual reality will be on display during IAAPA Expo 2019.

AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

on such topics as food and beverage operations and security.

A session highlight on Tuesday, Nov. 19, includes the CEO Speak, during which attendees will listen to several industry CEOs having a casual conversation about the roads

to success. Those participating include **Michael Brown**, CEO, **Urban Air Adventure Parks**; **Margo Manning**, chief operational officer (COO), **Dave and Busters**; **Matt Heller**, ICAE, founder, **Performance Optimist Consulting**; and

Ryan Stana, founder and CEO, **RWS Entertainment Group**.

Networking opportunities to bring like industry individuals together are held throughout the week as are a number of EDUTours. The latter include **Fun Spot America**, **Legoland Florida Resort**, **Conserving the Magic — Disney's Approach to Sustainability**, **SeaWorld Orlando**, **Universal Orlando's Newest Attraction** and **Gatorland**.

The trade show will be jam-packed as always with exhibitors showing off their new and tried-and-true products. It will run 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Tuesday-Thursday, Nov. 19-21, and 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Friday, Nov. 22.

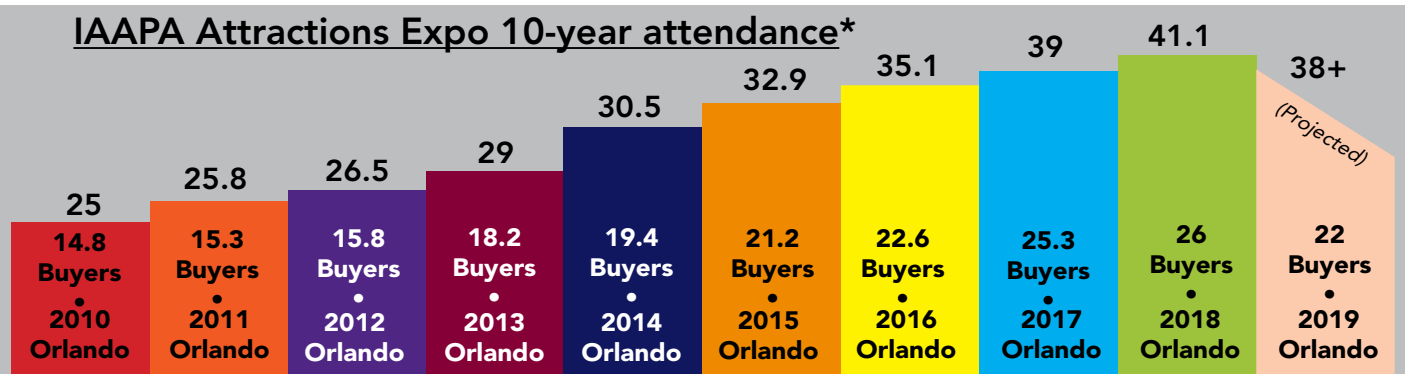
Many additional announcements will be made on the trade show floor, with scheduling updates daily. Visit IAAPA online for additional information regarding the event, related activities and accommodations.

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FASTFACTS



IAAPA Attractions Expo 10-year attendance*



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IAAPA 2019

IAAPA Expo Europe delivers a record trade show floor in Paris

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

PARIS — IAAPA Expo Europe 2019 (formerly Euro Attractions Show) added amusement industry sparkle to the City of Light as professionals from around the globe converged on the Paris Expo Porte De Versailles Sept. 16-19.

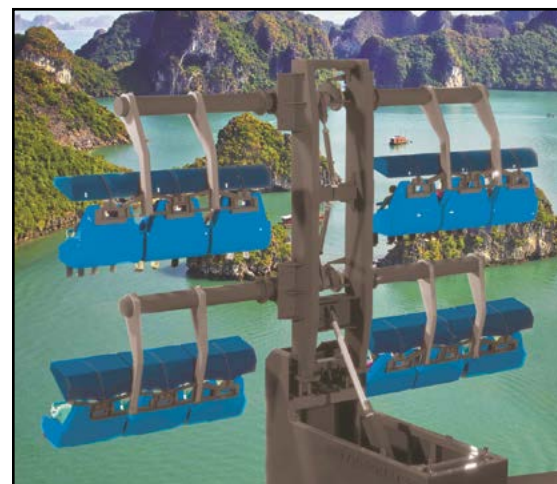


Hosted by the Orlando-based International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), IAAPA Expo Europe featured a record-breaking trade show covering more than 17,500 square meters.

The event attracted an estimated 15,900 participants, including 11,100 qualified buyers and 648 exhibiting companies. A 13 percent increase in exhibiting companies over the gathering's 2018 edition in Amsterdam reflected the continued vigor and growth of the global attractions industry, particularly in the Europe, Middle



Attendees on the busy trade show floor at IAAPA Expo Europe conducted business and made time for fun. Simworx's Mini Flying Theatre (lower right) was one of several new products rolled out at the event. COURTESY IAAPA



East, and Africa (EMEA) region.

"The show demonstrated the strength of the attractions industry throughout the EMEA region and the rest of the

world," said Jakob Wahl, executive director of IAAPA EMEA. "The trade show floor was the most expansive IAAPA Expo Europe has ever had. In addition,

our outstanding speakers — many from France — ensured the conference was informative and valuable for all attendees." "It was a remarkable week,"

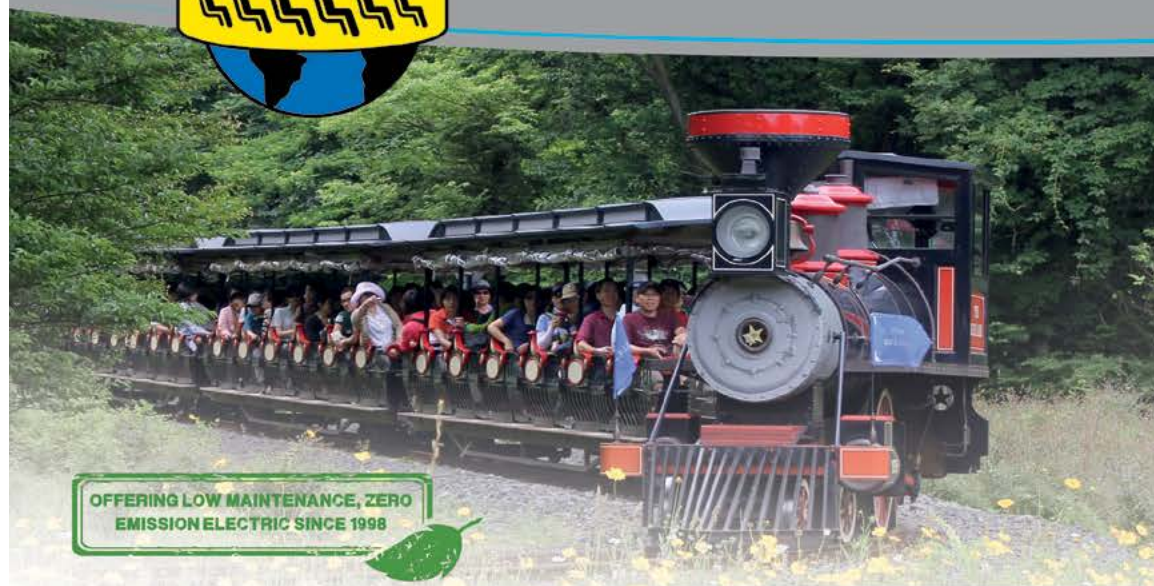
agreed Hal McEvoy, president of IAAPA. "Attractions industry professionals from around the

► See EUROPE, page 10



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IAAPA 2019

►EUROPE

Continued from page 8

world came together to focus on the future. Participants celebrated the industry, discovered new innovations, discussed emerging trends and explored opportunities that will help their companies take the guest experience to the next level."

According to the *IAAPA Global Theme and Amusement Park Outlook Report (2018-2022)*, parks across Europe will entertain more than 179.6 million during 2019. The industry is projected to thrive as new rides and planned expansions debut in the coming months.

Powered by that positive forecast, IAAPA Expo Europe presented opportunities to share best practices, understand the economic climate and learn about industry trends. The event focused on exceeding guest expectations while ensuring topics such as safety and sustainability remained at the fore.

The education conference offered more than 100 hours of in-depth educational sessions led by 131 industry experts from 21 countries, while new product rollouts took place all around the trade show floor.

U.K.-based dynamic media attractions company **Simworx**

introduced two major products: the AGV (Automated Guided Vehicle) Dark Ride and the Mini Flying Theatre. The trackless, cable-free AGV Dark Ride vehicle roams a programmed path at speeds Simworx said are "unrivaled within the industry" and can be combined with extras such as onboard 4D effects. The 20-seat Mini Flying Theatre, opening soon at **Baosun Wildlife Park** in Hanoi, Vietnam, is a more compact and affordable version of the company's Flying Theatre.

Embed of Singapore presented **Booking Boss**, an award-winning, web-based ticketing and booking management platform for the attractions, tourism and entertainment industries. **Alterface** of Wavre, Belgium, demonstrated the technology behind **Popcorn Revenge** — an interactive dark ride at **Walibi Belgium** developed in partnership with **Jora Vision** and **ETF Ride Systems**. The latter attraction picked up several industry awards. (See adjacent story.)

Planning has begun in earnest for **IAAPA Expo Europe 2020**, to be held in London at **Excel London** Sept. 22-24. Visit IAAPA online for updates and information.

•iaapa.org

Liseberg's new dark ride previewed in Paris



Scheduled to open in the spring, Liseberg's new investment for its children's area is the dark ride **Underland**. During IAAPA Expo Europe in Paris, the vehicle was on display for the industry to get a preview of the new rabbit-themed dark ride. The vehicle accommodates four people and moves at about 2.5 mph. Moving along rails, it will take passengers through the world of the Liseberg rabbits. COURTESY LISEBERG

Popcorn Revenge a winner in Paris

WAVRE, Belgium — **Alterface** was recognized during **IAAPA Expo Europe** in Paris for its successful **Popcorn Revenge**. The interactive dark ride in **Walibi Belgium** was nominated in four categories for the Park World Excellence Award. **Alterface** — together with partner **ETF Ride Systems** — won the Best Use of Technology Award for the innovative Erratic Ride technology. **Sesame Street: Street Mission**, a ride by **Sally Corp.** with **Alterface** interactivity, was awarded as Family Ride of the Year.

Together with Walibi Belgium, partners **Jora Vision** and **ETF Ride Systems** — during the European Star Awards at **Parc Asterix** — **Alterface** accepted for Europe's Best New Rides 2019. Once again, another prize was given in the same category to **Sesame Street: Street Mission**, by **Sally Corp.** with **Alterface** interactivity. At its booth, **Alterface** demonstrated its interactive technologies and **Popcorn Revenge**, which is now available as a turnkey solution with the popular IP along with a range of merchandising.

"IAAPA Expo Europe was an interesting show," commented **Benoit Cornet**, CEO and founder of **Alterface**. "It's always a great opportunity to interact with our customers, partners and industry journalists. Our team has enjoyed the interest and recognition for **Popcorn Revenge**, which is now just taking off, so watch out for more to come soon!"



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IAAPA 2019

2019 IAAPA Expo exhibitor listing

List is current as of Oct. 2, 2019. For last-minute changes, booth additions and cancellations, consult the IAAPA show directory.

1602 Group TiMax	471	Amusement Today	4215	Binzhou Nets Tribe Co. Ltd.	4490
2 Way Supply/Motorola Solutions	E7345	Amusements International, LLC	4404	Birds N Beasts Inc.	4789
24/7 Software	3382	Amusewind	2164	Birket Engineering	1771
360 Karting	E7433	Anchor Audio	2180	Bisque Imports	E7432
40 Below Joe	3557	Anchor Industries, Inc.	4600	Black Light Unity	308
5-hour Energy	3656	Andamiro Co.,ltd	1300	Blacklight Attractions / Halloween Productions	2082
50% OFF PLUSH	217	Animalive	E7235	BMI Merchandise	1824
A.E. Jeffreys Insurance	6103	ANVIO	E7007	Bob's Space Racers, Inc.	2615
A.R.M. (USA), Inc.	8140	AP Equipment Financing	4756	Bob's Space Racers, Inc.	2815
A&A Global Industries	400	Appetize	6115	Bob's Space Racers, Inc.	8030
Aardvark	3420	Apple Industries, Inc.	1600	BobProducts.com LLC	657
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accesso	4840	Aquatic Design Group	3752	BookNowSoftware	251
ACE Amusement Technologies Co., Ltd.	213	Aquatic Development Group, Inc.	2646	Bouncing Angels Inc.	5554
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Adolph Kiefer & Associates, LLC	4256	ARC-Studios	4482	BrainTap Technologies	E7627
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Advanced Animations, LLC	1669	Architectural Design Consultants, Inc.	980	Breeze Creative LLC	3684
Advanced Entertainment Services	3380	ARena Space - VR Parks Provider	5437	Bright White Paper Co.	2182
Adventure Facility Franchising Inc.	2192	Arihant Water Park Equipment	1844	Brogent Technologies, Inc.	5710
Adventure Golf Services	4231	Arrivalist	E7325	BROWN ENTERTAINMENT INTERNATIONAL	2742
Adventure Sports HQ Laser Tag	4734	Art Attack	5136	Brunswick Bowling Products, LLC	1078
Adventureglass	2613	Art-Fx Studios Inc	982	Bumper Boats, Inc.	3621
Aerodium Technologies	3218	Artistic Contractors, Inc.	169	Bungee Supply.com Inc	5680
Aerophile S.A.S.	3867	Ascentium Capital	5683	Busch Systems International	E7000
Aglare Lighting Co.,ltd	4245	Asia Amusement Machine Co. Ltd.	647	Buzzpark	1382
AIMS International	4527	Asia Attractions Magazine	4650	C. and S. S.r.l.	1829
Airhead Sports Group	1635	Astro Carpet Mills	4406	C.Cretors and Co.	3200
AIRO Amusement Equipment Co. Ltd.	4091	Astro Carpet Mills	4408	C.P.I Amusement & Pageantry World	1935
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Al Hokair Group	2878	Atlas Commercial Products	5780	C&Q Amusements	4626
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Alcorn McBride, Inc.	669	Attraction & Entertainment Solutions	Sponsor Only	Cabanas by Academy	E7406
Alinco Costumes, Inc.	2612	Attractions.io	E7021	Cadron Creek Play	E7020
Alive Risk	4682	Audio Innovators, Inc.	2836	Calico Cottage, Inc.	3719
Allied Specialty Insurance	3021	Autoclear	4512	Calplush Incorporation	3006
AlterEyes NV	E7201	AutoFry/MTI Products Inc.	4254	Camaleon LED	4647
Alterface Projects	E7041	Autograph Foliages	1367	Canon	6109
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Aluvii, Inc.	3086	AVS Companies	1617	Caravan Softys	2906
Alvarado	4654	Axalta Coating Systems	3819	CardPrinting.com	8230
amaZulu, Inc.	2069	B J Toy Company	2706	Carolina ATM Services, LLC	2712
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American Pinball	1918	Bay Tek Entertainment	1015	Characters Unlimited, Inc.	3712
American Specialty Insurance & Risk Services, Inc.	4602	BDR Design Group	1867	Cheer Amusement Corporation	4800
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		Big T Toys & Sports	2806	Clark Patterson Lee	4271
		BigAirBag B.V.	3282	Classic Products Corp.	3458
		Bike And A Box	3959	Classic Toy Company, Inc.	2811
		Bill's Lemonade	3760	Cleanbox Technology	E7727
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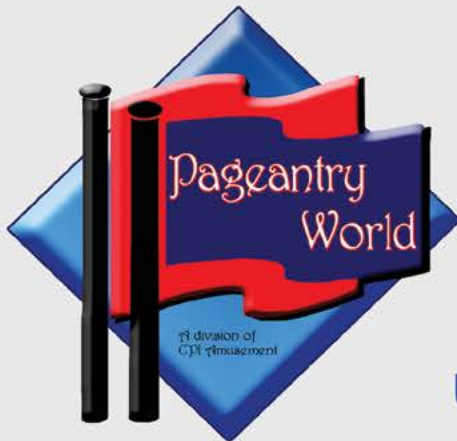
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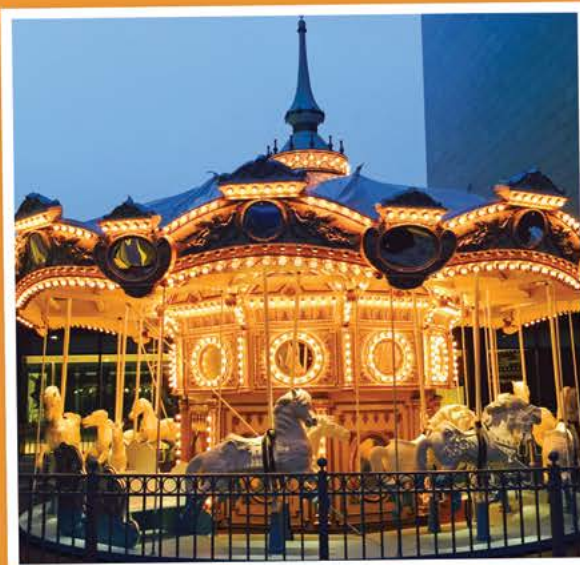
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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Illuminations bids farewell — page 26 / Funbox pop-up — page 32 / Big Air Trampoline Park — page 39

Louisiana's Storyland reopening brings out imaginative guests

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

NEW ORLEANS — At 10 a.m., on September 28, approximately 250 people stood waiting outside of the gates of **Storyland**, a special place in **City Park** where make-believe is certainly welcomed. Storyland has been delighting guests since the 1950s, but what was special on this day was the grand reopening.

Amanda Frentz, director of public relations at City Park, said Storyland was closed the first week of July this year for renovations.

"We added some new pieces and we enhanced some older pieces," Frentz said. "People were very excited to see what we had done."

Storyland is a themed playground filled with larger-than-life storybook characters featuring classic fairy tale characters. Children may climb aboard Captain Hook's pirate ship, follow Pinocchio into the mouth of a whale or scamper up Jack and Jill's hill.

It sits alongside **City Park's Carousel Garden Amusement Park** and near the **New Orleans Botanical Garden**, **New Orleans Museum of Art and Sculpture**



The reopening of Storyland, part of City Park in New Orleans, took place Sept. 28. Storyland is a themed children's area that lets guests' imaginations open up as they walk among exhibits displaying scenes and props from classic fairy tales. COURTESY STORYLAND

Garden, an 18-hole golf course, tennis complex, multiple athletic fields and large green spaces that make up City Park.

During the opening ceremony, **Bob Becker**, CEO of City Park, said: "We're excited to be able to present to the children of New Orleans and the region a chance to live inside of the stories they read."

This is the first major renovation in almost 35 years at Storyland. New exhibits to Storyland include: *Humpty Dumpty*, *Tortoise and the Hare*, *Boudreaux the Zydeco Gator* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

Existing renovated exhibits include *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Peter Pan's Pirate Adventure*, *Little Red Riding*



Hood, *The Three Little Pigs*, *Jack and Jill*, *Pinocchio and the Whale*, *Cinderella's Pumpkin*, *Puff the Magic Dragon* slide, *Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe*, *Old King Cole*, and the *Storyland Castle*.

Large enhancements have been made to *Alice in Wonderland*, *Hey Diddle Diddle*, the *Gingerbread Man's Candy Lane* and *The Little Mermaid*.

Frentz said most of the enhancements and new pieces and props came from local artists and their companies. However, they had to go a little further for some of the new items.

"We have a large pond with a mermaid in the center of it for our *Little Mermaid* exhibit," she said. "We decided to put remote-controlled boats in the pond for the kids and par-

ents. We had to get the boats from London. We purchased our large pieces of candy canes for the *Gingerbread* exhibit from Spain. Everything else was local."

The footprint of Storyland was not changed with the renovations, except for one piece.

"We had to go into the amusement park for just a tiny bit of space for the new *Jack and the Beanstalk* exhibit," Frentz said.

There also will be photo opportunities to become an astronaut or a mermaid and children can sit on Anansi the Spider's back.

The City Park will also house the **Charles Bolden, Jr.**

► See **STORYLAND**, page 24



New exhibits were added to Storyland this year and existing exhibits were enhanced. COURTESY STORYLAND



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►STORYLAND

Continued from page 23

LES Space Suit acquired on loan from NASA. Bolden was the first African-American to permanently hold the title of NASA Administrator. He also served as a NASA astronaut for 14 years and logged nearly 700 hours during four space flights.

The suit will be at City Park for five years, located inside the **Oscar J. Tolmas Visitor Center**, the main entrance to Storyland. The suit connects to the Hey Diddle Diddle exhibit, celebrating the diversity of NASA.

The renovation and revitalization were made possible through private funding from individuals and local foundations, with lead support from **Friends of City Park and Boy-sie & Joy Bollinger**.

•neworleanscitypark.com



The Charles Bolden, Jr., LES Space Suit acquired on loan from NASA will be on display at the entrance of Storyland. COURTESY STORYLAND

Park Post-its



AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

The Cranbrook Rotary Club, last month, celebrated the official opening of a new dual zipline, which replaced an existing zipline, as part of a slew of upgrades to amenities at **Idlewild Park** in East Kootenay C, British Columbia, Canada.

The Cranbrook Rotary Club funded and built the zipline in partnership with the City of Cranbrook and Western Financial Group.

Chris New, the Director of Corporate Wide Initiatives for the City of Cranbrook, said it was important to keep the zipline as an amenity at the park, which is in the process of an ongoing redevelopment plan.

According to a story that ran in the "Cranbrook Daily Townsman," the project's cost was estimated at between \$65,000-\$70,000.

Paula Deen's Family Kitchen is the newest addition to **OWA's** 520-acre resort destination in Foley, Alabama. The restaurant is slated to open this month.

Two job fairs were held last month to recruit employees to work in the restaurant.

OWA is centered on a 14-acre lake and includes a 22-ride amusement park, retail, dining and entertainment development.

The name "OWA" was inspired by the Muscogee Creek term for "big water."

The new \$93 million **Mississippi Aquarium** under construction in Gulfport, Mississippi, will make its debut on April 30, 2020.

Hopes were to have the new facility open by the end of this year or the beginning of 2020, but construction delays have resulted in a later opening date.

The new aquarium will contain more than one million gallons of both salt and freshwater on its 5.8-acre beachfront campus.

It will feature a 30-foot-long tunnel surrounding visitors with sea life and exterior habitats stretching the length of almost five football fields. It is expected to house alligators, river otters, fish, dolphins, stingrays, birds and more.

Once complete, the aquarium will employ 65 full-time and 45 part-time employees and attract a half-million visitors a year.

Britain's Merlin Entertainments announced last month in London that it has entered a partnership agreement with a Chinese joint venture to develop and operate a full-scale **Legoland Park and Hotels** in China's Sichuan Province.

The new park will be located within the Tianfu New Area in Meishan City, a little more than 37 miles south of central Chengdu, capital city of Sichuan Province, and is scheduled to open by 2023, according to a release by Merlin.

China's **Global Zhongjun Cultural Tourism Development Co., Ltd.**, will fund the construction of **Legoland Sichuan**, as well as the required infrastructure and adjacent commercial developments, while Merlin will partner in the resort's de-

velopment and operate it.

With good transport links by roads and a future metro station planned for the area, Legoland Sichuan will be within a two-hour reach of 30 million residents, said the statement.

Merlin operates over 120 attractions, 15 hotels and six holiday villages in 25 countries and across four continents, serving more than 65 million visitors worldwide.

In recent years, it has extended its Chinese portfolio with operating 13 attractions in China, including **Legoland Discovery Centers**, **Madame Tussauds**, **Sea Life Centers**, **Dungeons**, **Peppa Pig World of Play** and **Little Big City**.

American Dream, East Rutherford, New Jersey, opened two of its attractions on October 25, a theme park and **NHL-regulation-size ice rink**. But, it looks like guests will have to wait until late November to check out the indoor water park, early December for the snow park and March 2020 to shop and dine, officials announced.

The theme park, called **Nickelodeon Universe and Theme Park**, features more than 35 rides and other attractions. The ice rink, the **Rink at American Dream**, is opening the door for open skating, figure skating, hockey tournaments and other events.

The project's phased openings span through next March with a large portion of the center's retail and dining offerings slated to open by spring.

Triple Five Group, Edmonton, Canada, is the developer of the project. No specific timeline was given for the spring openings.

The **University of Michigan Museum of Natural History** in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is preparing to open the second half of the museum with new exhibits and labs for visitors this month.

The museum, part of the university's College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, closed in December 2017. It was officially reopened in April 2019 after moving into the new \$261 million Biological Sciences Building.

The new additions include an interactive journey through life's building blocks called "Under the Microscope," as well as an exhibit that looks at how the natural world has shaped human culture and how humans impact the natural world.

Two Orlando companies will partner to build a series of attractions that will eventually form the first theme park in the Dominican Republic.

Katmandu Group and **Falcon's Creative Group** will first build a new entertainment venue in Punta Cana, which will feature the debut of Falcon's Suspended Theater. The platform physically moves a group of riders through a narrative, simulating a flight through a fantasy realm.

Falcon's Creative Group has some history building immersive experiences for theme parks.

The company helped design **Kennedy Space Center's** Heroes and Legends exhibit and helped build a huge **National Geographic** installation in New York's Times Square.

Katmandu, Punta Cana, as the park is tentatively known as, is set to open late next year.

It will also include a 36-hole golf course designed by Katmandu and enhanced by Falcon's creative team.

Falcon's, which like Katmandu is located in southwest Orlando near Valencia College's West Campus, has also previously worked with **Sea-World**, **Universal Studios** and **Walt Disney Co.**

The new park will also feature a dark ride created by Falcon's that will take riders through the legend of Katmandu.

Zipline Ride

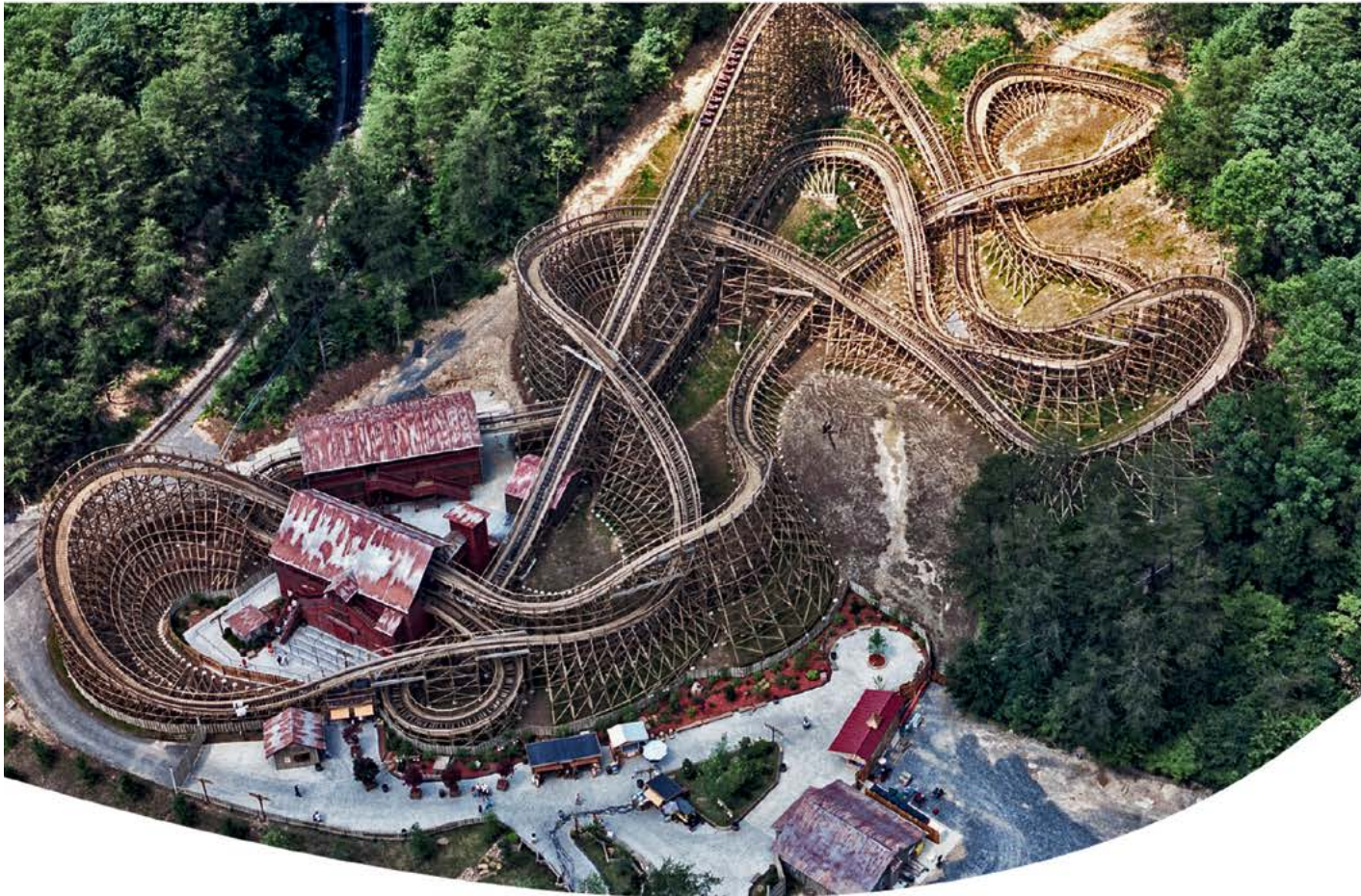


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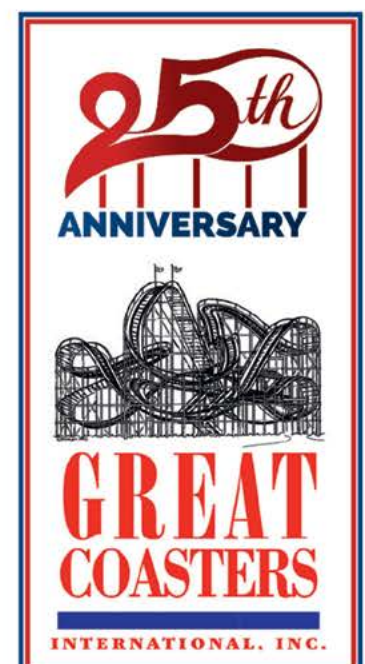


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IllumiNations bids farewell, new Epcot Forever waxes nostalgic

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — On Oct. 1, 2019, the 37th anniversary of the opening of Epcot, the park premiered its new nighttime spectacular, Epcot Forever, along with the new attraction the Epcot Experience, a sleek preview center and multimedia presentation highlighting the many changes and new attractions scheduled to open at the park over the next several years. The premier of Epcot Forever came just one day after a holiday-size crowd of fans and Disney cast members descended upon the park to bid farewell to the much-beloved “IllumiNations: Reflections of Earth,” which debuted as “IllumiNations 2000: Reflections of Earth” in 1999 as part of Walt Disney World’s Millennium Celebration.

Disney was cognizant of the strong fan base the predecessor to Epcot Forever had developed over its 20-year run, and they knew something special was required of its replacement to appease those guests. However, to produce a grand scale, next-generation nighttime spectacular, infrastructure



The Epcot Experience (left), is an immersive multimedia and projection mapping experience that provides guests with a peek into Epcot’s in-progress transformation and future attractions. Epcot Forever (right) delivers classic Disney pyrotechnic spectacle with the addition of LED and firework-illuminated kites and a nostalgic soundtrack. COURTESY WALT DISNEY WORLD; AT/DAVID FAKE



would need to be built, which would also require a sizeable amount of time to create after IllumiNations: Reflections of Earth ended its run. Enter Epcot Forever, the placeholder needed until next year when the park is scheduled to debut its new, (more) permanent nighttime spectacular, HarmoniUS. But don’t dismiss this inbetween show; it still delivers on spectacle, with its pyrotechnics, lasers, LED and firework-illuminated, jet-ski-towed kites. But even with the awe-inspiring spectacle, the show’s secret ingredient is its nostalgia.

Epcot Forever reaches back to Epcot’s founding principles of innovation, exploration, imagination, and celebration by including portions of many long-gone attractions’ signature songs in its soundtrack. “The great thing about [the show] is that it brings back the celebration songs and sounds that have made up Epcot over the last 37 years, which our guests can identify with from their visits to the park over the years, and conjures back their fond memories of those visits,” Jeremy Chase, producer, Disney Parks Live Entertainment, told AT. “One Little Spark” from Journey

into Imagination, “Tomorrow’s Child” from Horizons, “Veggie Veggie Fruit Fruit” from The Land’s Kitchen Kabaret, and “Tapestry of Nations” from the parade of the same name are among the yesteryear attraction inclusions.


Set to “A Whole New World” from Disney’s *Aladdin*, the show’s soundtrack takes a departure from what many expect from an Epcot show at its culmination. Until recent years, Epcot developed its identity apart from Disney’s iconic movies and characters. This inclusion appears to be a symbolic and

poetic nod to Epcot’s in-progress transformation, recently announced redesign elements, new attractions and redefined identity — of which these movie and television characters are very much a part.


The program is short, clocking in at just over 11 minutes, and many have noted the irony of the name Epcot Forever as the show is only slated to run into next year, but most guests will be so enraptured in the warm fuzzies of their rediscovered Epcot memories, they won’t even take note of those facts.

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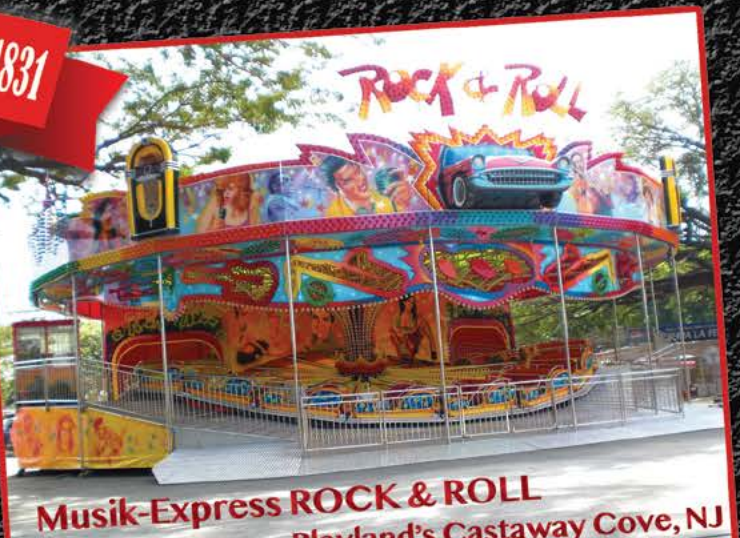
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White alligators get their own breeding facility at Gatorland

ORLANDO — Gatorland, the self-described “Alligator Capital of the World,” has opened a facility for white alligators. The new area within the 70-year-old animal attraction, called White Gator Swamp, officially debuted Oct. 4.

The habitat features three natural exhibits housing two male leucistic (characterized by loss of pigmentation) alligators, **Feros Zombi** and **Trezos Je**; a

male albino alligator, **Pearl**; and two female albino alligators, **Moonshine** and **Cottontail**. It is designed with filtered sunlight to meet the delicate needs of white alligators, which, because of their ivory coloration, are extremely sensitive to direct sunlight. Birds, fish, turtles and frogs share the reptiles’ habitat, giving the setting a more natural ecosystem.

According to Gatorland,

placing together these alligators carrying the genes that create leucism and albinism allows the attraction to claim that White Gator Swamp is the world’s largest breeding facility.

Gatorland received the donation of **Feros**, **Trezos** and **Jewan Kwok** (the latter is now located at Gator Spot at **Fun Spot America** in Orlando) from the **Audubon Zoo** in New Orleans in 2008. They were discovered in 1987 by a fisherman in Houma, Louisiana, and retained by the **Louisiana Land and Exploration Co., LLC**, an independent oil and gas production company.

At the zoo, the male leucistic alligators bred with normal-colored alligators, and two of the females from that group of offspring were also donated to Gatorland. Presumably, according to the park, they carry the very rare leucistic gene. Gatorland has raised **Pearl**, the male albino alligator, since 2008.

As a baby in 2009, **Pearl** became a media star during the opening of the 110-acre adventure park and wildlife preserve’s first white alligator



White Gator Swamp, a new reptile habitat at Gatorland in Orlando, officially opened Oct. 4. It is billed as the largest breeding facility for white (leucistic and albino) alligators in the world. COURTESY GATORLAND

exhibit. The reptile is now over eight feet long and remains an online traffic generator across Gatorland’s social media networks.

For more information on the park and its educational programs, visit gatorland.com.

—Dean Lamanna



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\$13M upgrade for Palm Springs tram



The Palm Springs Aerial Tramway’s Mountain Station will undergo two years of improvements that will make it more efficient and ADA compliant as well as enhance the experience. COURTESY PALM SPRINGS AERIAL TRAMWAY



PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — A facelift and backstage improvements are in the works for the mountaintop end of the **Palm Springs Aerial Tramway**.

In operation since 1963, the popular attraction carries visitors from a point near the floor of the Coachella Valley to just below the summit of 10,834-foot Mount San Jacinto. The rugged Sonoran Desert landscape gives way to an alpine forest, and the outdoor temperature drops as much as 40 degrees during the scenic ascent.

The tram’s lodge-like Mountain Station, designed by noted midcentury architect **E. Stewart Williams** and completed two years before the transport’s inaugural ride, provides a number of services and has seen few changes over the decades. The planned renovations and modifications will take place over two years and include upgrading of the restaurants, bar, museum, theater and restrooms to make them more efficient, comfortable and ADA compliant. Four new fireplaces, new furnishings, a modernized kitchen and improved utility systems are included in the plans.

The expected cost of the project is reportedly \$13.3 million.

Visit pstramway.com for the attraction’s operating schedule.

—Dean Lamanna

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Gerstlauer's Mystic brings high-profile thrills to Walibi Rhône-Alpes

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

LES AVENIÈRES, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France — In making a name for itself, **Walibi Rhône-Alpes** continues to add rides to quench the thirst of thrill seekers. Just three years after adding Timber, a wooden coaster from **The Gravity Group**, a new dazzling tangle of steel has taken the form of Mystic, a unique roller coaster supplied by **Gerstlauer**.

Operated by **Compagnie des Alpes** since 2006, the park originally opened in 1979 and has had various owners and operators since. The current leadership is showing dedication to some substantial additions.

Defined as an Infinity model by Gerstlauer, Mystic sports a custom layout for the Walibi park. By its nature, it is a shuttle coaster, but the creative design also features a chain lift at the beginning.

As guests queue through a barnlike shed, mysterious markings, eerie images and foreboding masks are seen throughout the surroundings. It is just unsettling enough to set the stage. A skull's face

Gerstlauer's Mystic sports a custom layout for Walibi Rhône-Alpes. The reverse spike (top) has great spectator appeal and adds a themed thrill for riders. In pushing the limits of what an Infinity model coaster can offer, Mystic boasts three inversions (bottom left). Voodoo-style adornments decorate each train (bottom right).
COURTESY GERSTLAUER



► See MYSTIC, page 30

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Mystic has become the centerpiece of a New Orleans-themed area of Walibi Rhône-Alpes. A daring first drop from 102 feet (above left) produces speeds of 53 mph. COURTESY GERSTLAUER



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►MYSTIC

Continued from page 29

adorns the front of each train adding to the mystique of the ride. The station is draped in objects and paraphernalia culminating the mysterious set up. It's fun to note the menacing laughter as trains are dispatched.

The ride begins with a vertical climb. After reaching a height of 102 feet, riders plunge into a snarl of elements, three of which are upside-down inversions: a zero-G roll, a diving loop and an inline rollback. A curving first drop sends trains of 12 riders seated in three rows of four plunging at a speed of 53 mph. Twisted curves and directional changes follow, as well as the inversions. In its most signature move, the trains climb an angled piece of track that spirals riders into an upside-down position, only to lose all momentum and begin the adventure backward. Backtracking along a portion of the track, riders shuttle back and forth to a magnetic brake run. Once stopped, a piece of transfer track moves the train into place to advance back into the station. The track length is 1,886 feet long, although a section of it is traversed in both directions.

"Gerstlauer has really worked to push the envelope with the elements the Infinity Coaster can offer," said **Adam Sandy**, president of business development, Ride Entertainment, which represents Gerstlauer in the U.S. "After refining the platform, the company's designers want the coaster to showcase as many different marketable, thrilling elements as possible. In the case of Mystic, the dead-end spike complemented the ride's inversions and 31-meter vertical lift. Dangling out over the midway, this element became a showcase for the park and an area where guests gather to watch riders dangle inverted."

To celebrate its 40th birthday in 2019, Walibi Rhône-Alpes added more new additions than just the new roller coaster. A New Orleans-themed area now includes a new family attraction, Les P'tits Cauldrons spinning tubs ride; a re-themed tower drop ride, La Totem; and new restaurant, Chez Marie Laveau. The entire investment this year was more than €6,000,000.

•walibi.fr

Five of the Top 10 Wooden Coasters feature PTCI Trains

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Funbox explores, expands boundaries of pop-up walkthrough

AT: Dean Lamanna
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ARCADIA, Calif. — In this age of **Instagram** and other social media platforms, self-taken and instantly posted photographic keepsakes fuel a growing attraction subcategory: the pop-up walkthrough.

Funbox, one of the latest of these often wildly imaginative, colorful and, indeed, artful exhibits, transforms childhood dreams and toys into three-dimensional environments for the enjoyment of all ages.

Introduced in Thousand Oaks, California, near Los Angeles last fall, the self-described “selfie emporium” relocated several months later about 50 miles east to the **Westfield Santa Anita** mall in Arcadia — welcoming, since its original debut, its 200,000th visitor before the end of July. Funbox’s planned next stop will be in San Diego on a date to be announced.

The \$1 million, 10,000-square-foot traveling attraction, arranged in mazelike form, comprises two dozen art installations and exhibits designed by artists and engineers from around the world. More than 100,000 individual pieces and props help shape the experience, which typically can be enjoyed during a visit lasting 45-60 minutes.

“We go for the ‘Pixar Effect,’ said **Antonio Nieves**, a 25-year-old entrepreneur from Las Vegas, who developed the concept with out-of-home entertainment advertising veteran **Laurence Hallier**. “What we create inside Funbox must be fun for both children and their parents. It makes kids go bonkers — and adults feel like they’re five again.”

The entrance to Funbox is a 16-foot-long tunnel lined with teddy bears of various styles and sizes. Guests encounter

and interact with a party ball pit, a tornado of balloons, a larger-than-life cereal bowl (containing outsize cereal resembling Froot Loops), a fuzzy car wash and — thanks to clever visual trickery — an infinity room.

The Arcadia location also offered some seasonal fun, with many of the installations given a temporary Halloween overlay. And while the space’s design and layout preclude birthday party hosting, Funbox is available for corporate events with 20 persons or more. Ticket sales are primarily transacted online in advance to ensure entry, particularly on weekends, which have been selling out.

Nieves got his inspiration for Funbox from his nine younger siblings and an upbringing in the foster care system. Wherever the attraction travels, it supports a small, localized, community charity that advocates and supports children in foster care. (Its Arcadia run is supporting **Friends of Foster Children San Gabriel Valley**.)

“The demand for something like Funbox has been overwhelmingly positive,” Nieves said. “Not only are mall shoppers loving the experience, but the mall operators are, too. With our success inside of big and small malls, we are getting calls from all over the country to open a Funbox inside large vacant spaces from the mall apocalypse.

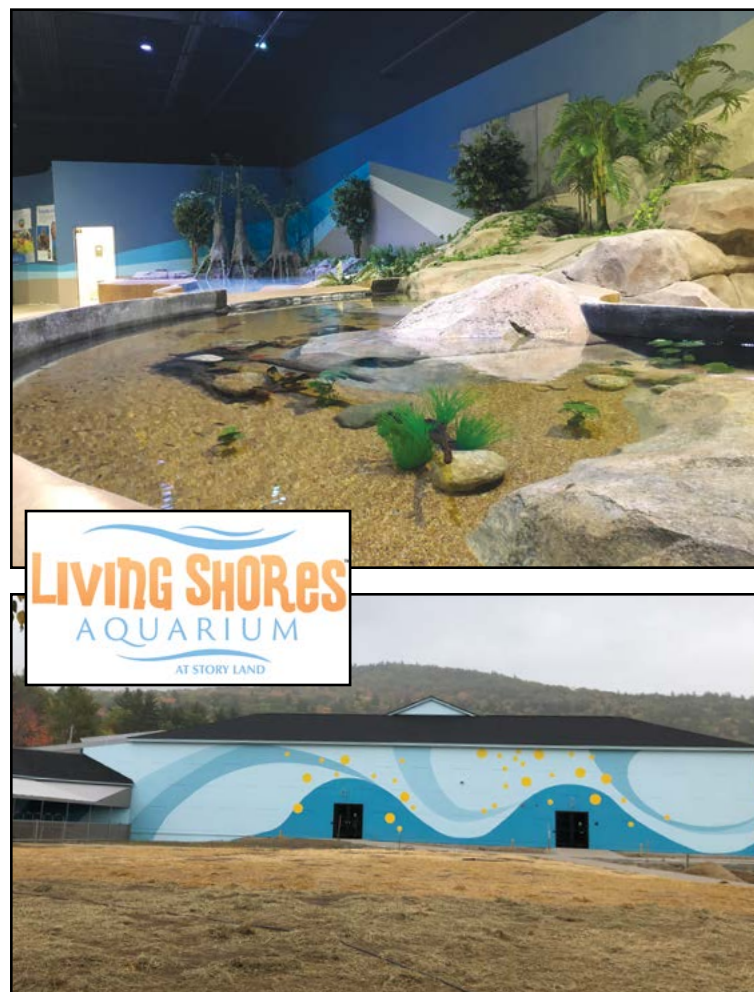
“It’s a perfect fit and partnership.”

•funbox.com

Funbox, a whimsical pop-up walkthrough, is leaving a trail of smiles and charitable support as it travels around Southern California.
COURTESY FUNBOX



Story Land opens second, year-round gate: Living Shores Aquarium



AT: Tim Baldwin
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GLEN, N.H. — Tucked away into the mountainside of New England is a beloved family park that carries an emphasis on children. **Story Land** opened its gates in 1954 and has enjoyed entertaining millions of guests in the decades since. Built as a village that helped fairy tales and story characters come to life, the park has grown into a charmingly themed family park that offers live entertainment and a multitude of

Living Shores Aquarium is a new year-round attraction to join alongside New Hampshire’s Story Land. The new aquarium is owned and operated by the renowned family park.
COURTESY STORY LAND

attractions full of heart.

As *Amusement Today* went to press, Story Land was placing final touches on its second gate. Placed adjacent to the theme park, **Living Shores Aquarium** is a new 32,000-square-foot facility that will now offer year-round entertainment. Story Land owns the building and property and will operate the new attraction.

“We started discussing this project back in 2016,” said **Eric Dziedzic**, general manager of Story Land. “We were looking for something unique that you don’t see in this area and this region.”

Dziedzic says the roads in winter in New Hampshire are well taken care of and easily traversed with its skiing clientele. The hope is that Living Shores will attract those visitors with an additional form of entertainment.

“We turned to industry professionals — everyone involved with this project

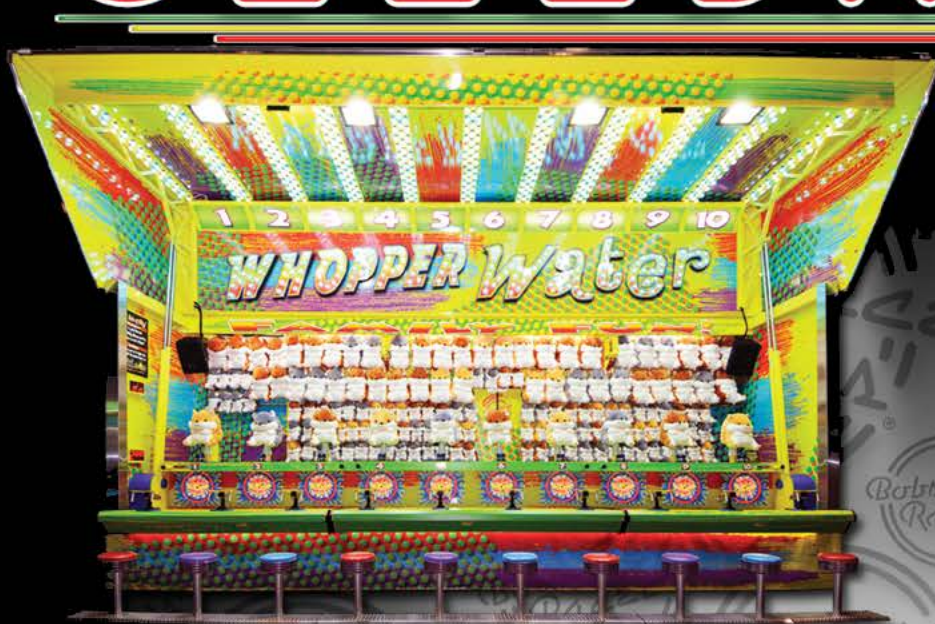
has built aquariums all over the world from the design process to the installation,” said Dziedzic. “I’m so excited to see this attraction come to life and provide another unique entertainment option. Story Land is such a cool and unique facility, and Living Shores is going to bring that even more to the forefront.”

The aquarium features four tidepool areas where children and adults can reach into the water and touch sea stars, hermit crabs, stingrays, bamboo sharks and more. A fully immersive tropical aviary will allow lorikeets to free fly in that habitat, while red-footed tortoises will be in an open-air enclosure to be viewed up close. Snakes, lizards, spiders and other species will be in the rainforest environment, but obviously in contained enclosures for maximum display.

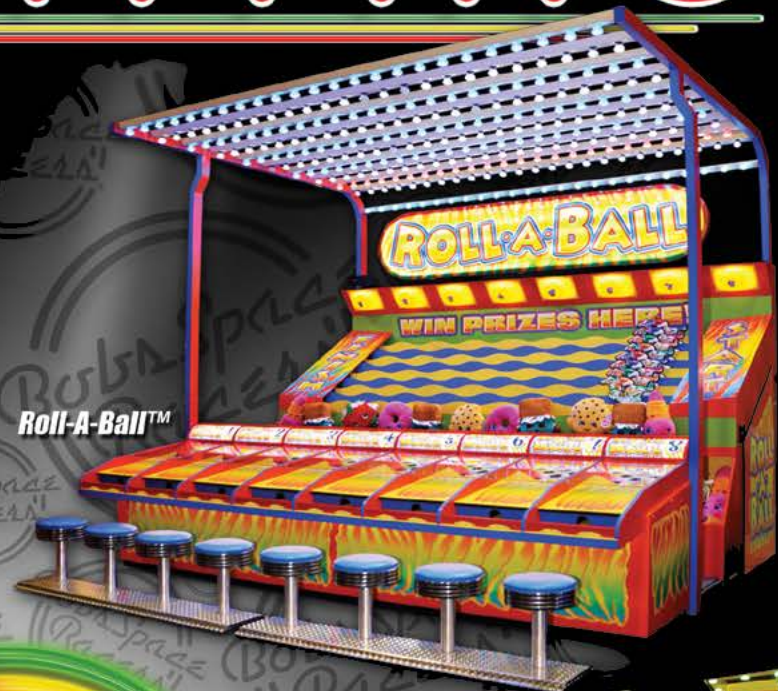
“There will be over a

► See **AQUARIUM**, page 34

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Scruffy Dog designs FEC in Saudi Arabia



Scruffy Dog Group Global Creative Services was appointed by High Point Hospitality to design ColorMotion in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The facility houses various activities, each represented by a color, allowing guests to navigate via a colored path along the floors and walls.
COURTESY SCRUFFY DOG

►AQUARIUM

Continued from page 32

hundred species of animals," Dziedzic told AT. "We will have both freshwater and marine fish, birds, mammals, six Asian short-clawed otters, and a bunch of invertebrates such as sea stars and urchins."

The total gallon volume in the entire aquarium is close to 80,000. About 47,000 is dedicated to saltwater marine life, while 33,000 gallons play host to freshwater species. "The reef tank with the eels is like being in the Caribbean," he added.

"Our biggest tank is the New Hampshire freshwater fish tank, which is about 25,000 gallons," said Dziedzic. "All species are found in New Hampshire. They're not necessarily native to New Hampshire but are found here. It's tough to say what is the focal point because every exhibit is spectacular in its own way."

In addition to the big animal exhibits, interactive activities are expected to entertain a variety of ages. Two discovery stations will captivate imaginations, particularly those of the young. An augmented reality sandbox will let guests carve valleys and spaces in the sand and watch them fill with water with the change of elevation. Coloring pages with fish will let children's creations come to life as the artwork suddenly appears in a simulated fish tank swimming around and even following children for a short period of time. The supplier of these attractions is **Breeze Creative**.

The ubiquitous retail outlet is in place, but the property also boasts an Italian eatery with both indoor and outdoor seating.

"The outdoor patio has a gorgeous view of the mountains," said Dziedzic. "We're going to be serving fresh pastas and pizzas. It's another exciting piece."

Living Shores is currently scheduled to be open daily. Management estimates an expected length of stay to be about two hours.

Prices currently range from \$19.99 – \$22.99 depending upon peak times of the year. During Story Land's operational calendar, combo tickets will present a value to visitors. Guests can purchase tickets in advance at living-shores.com.



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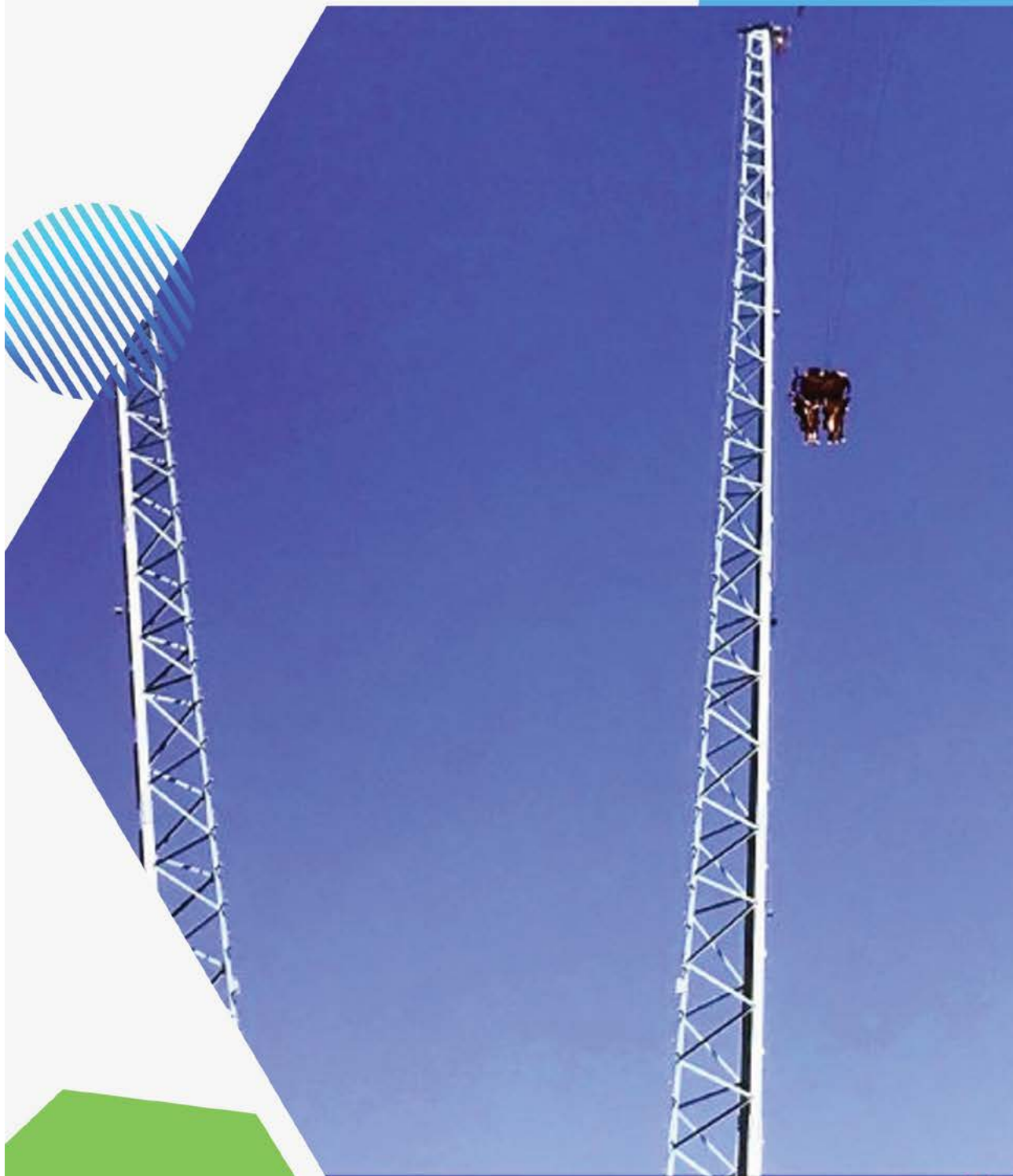


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Rocky Mountain's Zadra sets records at Energylandia in Poland

AT: Tim Baldwin

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ZATOR, Poland — **Energylandia** is a park that has made a fast name for itself. Having only opened in 2014, the park's coaster count is already an impressive 15. While several coasters are smaller production models, the park has multiple custom installations that are particularly noteworthy. Just last year, an **Intamin** hypercoaster, **Hyperion**, surpassed the 250-foot mark.

The park has just recently opened **Zadra**, another significant thriller just a year later. The manufacturer is **Rocky Mountain Construction (RMC)** and it sets a new record for the company. Surpassing **Cedar Point's Steel Vengeance** by one foot, at 206 feet, **Zadra** stands as the tallest coaster from RMC as well as a new record for the industry term "hybrid."

Zadra features an open lift structure (reminiscent of a previous project, **Goliath** at **Six Flags Great America**). This architectural feature allows one of the ride's most daring moments — a zero-G stall — to pierce the sky directly below the lift before diving back into the wooden bulk of the rest of the structure.

In all, **Zadra** incorporates three inversions within its 4,317 feet of track. Top speed on the coaster tops 75 m.p.h., which is reached from a 90-degree first drop. Designed by **Alan Schilke** of **Ride Centerline**, the massive coaster exhibits the smoothness and fluidity of previous RMC creations. Numerous moments of airtime and darting directional shifts make for an exhilarating layout.

Theming to the ride references a medieval land of dragons. A metallic dragon's head is placed on the front of each train. The coaster is the anchor to the new five-hectare section. The area, called **Smoczy Grod (Dragon Castle Zone)**, also features a monorail ride, a flat ride and two junior coasters. **Preston & Barbieri** provided a family coaster, and **Frida** is a **Vekoma** junior coaster. Those rides opened a month before the RMC installation was completed.

"The owner of **Energylandia** really wanted the ride open [earlier]. Originally we expressed that that wouldn't be possible, but I guess persistence pays off!" said **Jake Kilcup**, COO, RMC. The ride officially opened early on Aug. 22.

Zadra is the second RMC coaster to open in Europe this

year behind **Untamed** at **Walibi Holland**, which opened almost eight weeks prior. The Poland project is notable for being the first from-the-ground-up **IBox** hybrid creation for RMC. The company has built a solid reputation for building award-winning rides utilizing previous wooden coaster structures.

Of note, **Energylandia** is not stopping to take a breath. On tap for 2020 is a large multi-inversion coaster from **Vekoma** called **Aqualantis**.

•energylandia.pl



Zadra is the 15th roller coaster at **Energylandia**. The ride uses an open structure (right) below the coasters lift. COURTESY ENERGYLANDIA





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Incredible Pizza Company of Springfield, Missouri, has purchased the **PowerPlay** family entertainment center in Shawnee, Kansas. A \$4 million renovation of the 73,000-square-foot building is underway. The opening is projected for February 2020.

When complete, **Incredible Pizza – Kansas City** will offer 14 rides and attractions as well as more than 100 video and arcade games. The indoor Fairgrounds will include Bumper Cars, Go Karts and Laser Tag. In addition, the facility will add a new Scrambler, La Bamba, The Whip and a Laser Maze.

"We have wanted to expand into the Kansas City area for a long time," said **Rick Barsness**, Incredible Pizza founder and CEO. "It was a long journey to find enough space to house all the operations of an Incredible Pizza Entertainment Center and when this building became available, it was an easy decision. I believe our food, fun, family & friends concept will resonate with Kansas City families."

Urban Air announced it is expanding to include a new **Urban Air Adventure Park** in Augusta, Georgia. The new park will open in the Spring of 2020.

"As the leader in indoor family entertainment, we bring challenging indoor activities to new heights, year-round everyday," said **Michael Browning**, chief executive officer of Urban Air Adventure Parks. "Driven by a focus on active play, we could not think of a better place for expansion than Augusta. We are excited to open our doors in Augusta soon!"

The Urban Air Adventure Park will be a state-of-the-art destination for Augusta and its surrounding areas. The new Urban Air facility will provide more than 46,485-square-feet of activities from trampolining and rock climbing to indoor playgrounds.



FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

AT: John W.C. Robinson

jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

The centerpiece of the family entertainment center will feature expansive trampoline arenas where guests can jump, play, bounce, flip, spin and dunk. The park will also feature its signature competitive attractions: The Urban Warrior Course, as well as Battle Beam, where guests can compete with one another for bragging rights. Additionally, the Urban Air Sky Rider Indoor Coaster will be a venue highlight, offering a bird's eye view of all Urban Air entails.

YDX Innovation Corp. announced that it has signed an agreement with **Launch Family Entertainment** to have Arkave VR as an official solution offered to Launch Family Entertainment franchisees. The companies have also agreed to install an Arkave VR arena at Launch Hartford in Connecticut. The arena in Hartford is operated by Launch Corporate and is a model to test new solutions before they can be officially offered to franchisees.

Arkave VR will be included as a solution of **Paradox**, a sub-brand created by Launch to offer attractions classified as electronic games and Virtual Reality. The company will create special conditions to offer Arkave VR to the 33 Launch Parks currently operating as well as to the other 33 locations currently under development.

"We are thrilled with the partnership with Launch and appreciate the trust in our product," stated **Daniel Japiassu**, CEO of YDX Innovation Corp. "This all started by testing Arkave at Launch Doral so we could learn more about how to operate a VR attraction at a trampoline park and we are happy to see the relationship developing."

Superfly and **Two Bit Circus**, the year-old location-based entertainment facility based in Los Angeles, are working together to launch an immersive music event series, titled SuperBit. The series will be held at Two Bit Circus's unique micro-amusement park with 38,000-square-feet of VR/AR experiences combined with classic carnival entertainment.

SuperBit explores what the future of music and tech can hold. The event is modeled after Two Bit Circus's popular Beta Nights, where a curated group of third party developers and creators showcase, test, and get feedback on new projects. SuperBit invites the creative music-tech community to gather and experience new paradigms for fans to engage with music and for artists to share their stories.

"The opportunity for creativity in music and tech is unprecedented," said **Rick Farman**, co-founder of Superfly. "We think Two Bit Circus is the ideal collaborator to highlight some of the most innovative experiences in this space."

Ready, Set, Fun!, a new age interactive family entertainment center opened its doors on Oct. 13. The facility offered a new kind of fun for Atlanta-area families by providing adventure-driven augmented reality (AR) spaces and classes to foster creativity and learning among children, while also giving parents a clean, contemporary space to learn, socialize, work and even relax.

"Our unique play spaces are not only fun, but also beneficial in developing hand-eye coordination and motor function," said **Hedi Toub**, founder and creative director of Ready, Set, Fun!

"Ready, Set, Fun! was created to stimulate imagination and creativity within young developing minds in a clean and forward-thinking, fun entertainment center for the entire family to enjoy today and for years to come."



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Big Air Trampoline Park promotes active family entertainment

Southern California-based brand adding locations across U.S.

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

CORONA, Calif. — True to its name, **Big Air Trampoline Park** is growing by leaps and bounces.

The entertainment center franchising company, headquartered in Ladera Ranch, California, has been expanding its springy footprint well beyond its original Southern California romping grounds. Currently operating in eight locations in five states — including attractions-rich Branson, Missouri, and Buena Park, California — the brand will add a facility in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, in early 2020 (becoming the third Big Air in the state). As of October, nearly 20 additional franchise deals had been signed or were in early development.

"It's a very fast expansion — but it's controlled, because we are growing support structures in conjunction with the growth of our system," said **Kevin Odekirk**, president of Big Air, during a roundtable interview with *Amusement Today* at the brand's Corona location, which debuted in June. Joining the discussion from Big Air were **Erin Davis**, director of operations for the franchising team; **Blake Spencer**, franchisee support consultant; and **Vicki Cassidy**, owner-operator of the Corona franchise.

Focused primarily on trampoline-based activities, Big Air facilities range in size from 30,000-40,000-plus square feet and feature a main trampoline court, a ninja warrior course, a foam pit, basketball dunk courts and dodgeball. In addition, Big Air offers climbing wall challenges, mechanical bull riding and head-to-head padded joust-



Big Air Trampoline Park offers climbing walls and padded jousting called Battlebeam as well as jumping action. The company's passionate executive team and franchise family power the fun (above right, from left): Erin Davis, director of operations; Kevin Odekirk, president; Vicki Cassidy, Corona, California, franchise owner-operator; and Blake Spencer, franchisee support consultant. COURTESY BIG AIR TRAMPOLINE PARK; AT/DEAN LAMANNA (BIG AIR TEAM)

ing on a padded beam, plus, at some units, ziplines, laser mazes, virtual reality games and other higher-tech amusements.

The brand prides itself on its award-winning birthday program, regular events (e.g., Toddler Time on select weekday mornings, Cosmic Nights for teens with blacklights, lasers and music on weekends) and Big Eats, its convenient, quality-conscious in-house food service. And particularly its name.

"'Big Air' hints at the core of who we really are, which is active family entertainment," Odekirk said. "And as the industry evolves, it can mean so much more than just trampolines — especially in our day and age, with the obesity epidemic where it is and digital entertainment taking over.

"There's a five-word lesson that I teach all my franchisees the very first time we talk: 'Your park is never finished.' You're

always looking at what's new, what's next."

Several years ago, as a working mom with two young daughters, Vicki Cassidy was ready for something new career-wise. A regular customer of Big Air's Laguna Hills facility, she was so impressed by its cleanliness, safety and participatory recreation options that she and her husband decided to open their own franchise about 32 miles north in Corona.

"My kids, who are now teenagers active in sports, were just getting into cellphones back then," Cassidy said. "At Big Air, children are not on their phones — they're jumping around instead of sitting around. And their parents usually follow them around and jump with them, coming out just as sweaty."

That post-run physical condition recalled something else that impressed Cassidy about the Laguna Hills location:



A jump on competitors

The absence of bad air at Big Air is another point of pride for the company.

"We hold ourselves to a different standard than certainly what was had in the trampoline park industry when we arrived," Odekirk said. "The industry of old was an empty-warehouse one. They had an industrial space, threw in some trampoline equipment and didn't really care too much about branding or, in some cases, heating, ventilation and air conditioning [HVAC]. We have engineered HVAC, and on top of that we have scent diffusers to counteract smells."

Location also is key to Big Air's appeal.

"Birthday Mom does not want to plan her child's party across the railroad tracks, proverbially speaking," Odekirk said. "She wants to have it in a highly retail-centric, family-friendly environment. Our [2013-opened flagship] Big Air park in Laguna Hills was far more retail-centered than a lot of

► See **BIG AIR**, page 42

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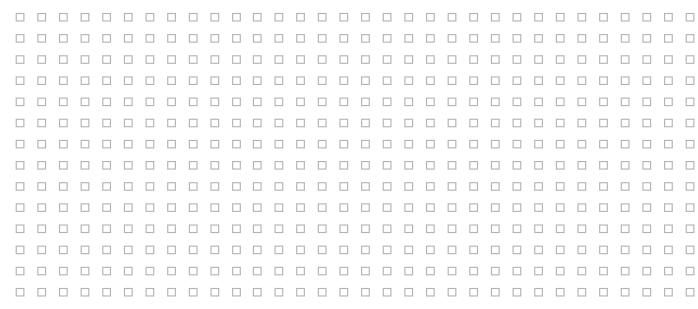
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Serial trampolining and mechanical bull riding are among the activities in store for Big Air guests of all ages.
COURTESY BIG AIR TRAMPOLINE PARK

►BIG AIR Continued from page 39

our competitors."

Similarly, the Corona location occupies 34,100 square feet within a former **Kmart** department store shell in a welcoming suburban strip mall. With commercial space vacancies on the rise, Odekirk noted that opportunities for well-sited Big Air units "keep presenting themselves as **Amazon** continues its forward march through all of the other retailers."

Big Air itself arose from a twist of business fate that struck **Wild Rivers** in Irvine, California, in 2011. One of the country's most profitable water parks, the operation was forced to close when landlord **The Irvine Co.** opted not to renew the lease in favor of residential development. The park's vice president, industry veteran **Greg Briggs**, a 1998 **World Waterpark Assn.** Hall of Fame inductee, then led other members of the Wild Rivers management team in an initial plan to build and acquire water parks around the western U.S.

After purchasing its first water park in Redlands, California, the team explored options to generate revenue at the property year-round. Some indoor space was repurposed into **SkyTown**, a trampoline park, and its success refocused the team on the trampoline park industry. With Briggs as CEO and founder of the new company, the first Big Air facility was opened in Laguna Hills. (Briggs also became a founding member of the **International Association of Trampoline Parks**.)

Hired by Big Air as it prepared to open its second location in Buena Park in 2015, Odekirk, having demonstrated executive / Fortune 500-level suc-

cess driving bottom-line growth through marketing, education and sales management for brands including **Jaguar Land Rover**, **Max Muscle Sports Nutrition** and **EMI / Capital Records**, had to determine the concept's franchise-worthiness.

"I came in and did my due diligence," he said. "And I found a business that had the three things that, to me, were needed for franchising — it had to be simple, repeatable and effective, with the bottom line numbers to make it work. I'm really pleased that we've been able to leverage all three of those things very effectively."

Big Air also "leverages almost three decades of park operational experience," said Odekirk, who holds a marketing degree from **Brigham Young University** in Provo, Utah, and an MBA from **Texas A&M University**, and who honed his presentation skills performing on Broadway (*Les Misérables*) and touring with singer-actor **Julie Andrews**. The company's customer service (including accommodating guests with special needs), group sales, membership program, safety protocol and community outreach are modeled on the operation built at Wild Rivers and have been applied effectively to the trampoline space.

Value all around

Big Air's average per-unit revenue of \$2.6 million annually derives from four sources: general admission (66%), birthdays and events (19%), food and beverage (11%) and retail (3%). General admission guests book jump sessions by the hour, with subsequent sessions booked after the first hour offered at

► See BIG AIR, page 43

►BIG AIR

Continued from page 42

50% off to incentivize extending length of stay.

"While the bulk of our business is general admission, parties drive it," said Erin Davis, a member of the original management crew from Wild Rivers, where she got her first job as a lifeguard in 1995 and eventually headed the medical team. "When somebody has a party, they're exposing 10, 15, 20 of their friends to this experience and drive the business forward."

Davis, who managed Big Air's Buena Park location for several years before joining the company's franchising team, provides support to franchisees with special focus on park design, operations, maintenance and safety. She is assisted generally and on quarterly franchisee onsite visits by Blake Spencer, who previously worked as an assistant manager at the Buena Park facility.

"Safety is our number-one priority and is at the forefront of everything we teach our franchisees and their staffs," Spencer said. "That includes court capacity, how many people per trampoline, and how many people should be playing on dodgeball and other attractions at once."

"The industry today is better than it has ever been in terms of safety and standards," Odekirk noted. "I'm proud to say that all Big Air parks are 100 percent ASTM compliant and that all of my frontline employees are CPR certified. It's a core value of who we are."

According to Odekirk, a significant portion of the trampoline park industry still does not offer in-house food service — something he finds flabbergasting in a business that promotes party hosting.

"Try outsourcing that many pizzas to that many parties and having them delivered at the right time and temperature, with the right ingredients — that's going to be the first rea-

son why you want to provide food service," he said. "With our Big Eats in-house model, we can provide all of that at a high quality at the right time. It's about meeting the customer's needs holistically, with a one-stop shop, and it's a very serious business within a business."

In addition to the usual park goodies, such as corndogs, churros and **Dippin' Dots**, Big Eats offers healthier and regional food alternatives and uses air frying instead of deep frying.

At the very top of the menu, said Odekirk, is enhanced memory-making.

"Parents throwing a birthday party at Big Air don't have to plan, cook, set up or clean up, which allows them to focus on what really matters — spending time with their kids, enjoying the party and being *in* the pictures instead of on the outside preparing everything."

Big Eats was another feature that helped sell Vicki Cassidy and her husband on the Big Air franchise — their purchase of which she described as a "seamless experience. There are many pitfalls with starting up your own business, especially in California, and Big Air helps

you all the way through. I could contact anybody at any time if I had a question or issue. Without that guidance, I wouldn't have had the confidence."

Odekirk attributed the success of Big Air's operational philosophy to three founding principles: perfecting the guest experience, driving profitability and increasing individual worth. While acknowledging that the attractions mix and careful decision-making can fulfill the first two, he emphasized that the latter requires fostering interactions of lasting positivity between personnel and patrons.

"Everyone who comes in contact with the Big Air brand should be better for having done so," Odekirk said. "They include guests who've created memories here that they can take away with their families and the kid who now has a feeling of accomplishment after doing something new on one of our attractions."

"It also means my employees are better for having connected with the Big Air family — every one of them should become stronger professionally and personally. That's the way companies become great."

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COURTESY

BIG AIR TRAMPOLINE PARK

Spokane County Interstate Fair starts rainy, increases attendance

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

SPOKANE VALLEY, Wash. – Even though weather hampered the beginning of the 68th annual **Spokane County Interstate Fair**, 618 more folks walked in the gate this year over 2018, bringing the final attendance to 206,615. “The rain on the first Sunday and Monday of the 10 days of the fair made for low attendance on these days, but in the end we were able to rebound and exceed last year’s attendance numbers,” said **Erin Gurtel**, director, Spokane County Interstate Fair. **Jesse Bogue** with **Butler Amusements** echoed Gurtel. “We had rain on the first Sunday, but ideal fair weather for the rest of the fair.”

The fair always begins the Friday after Labor Day each year for a 10-day run. The theme this year was **Pirates of the Carrots and Beans**.

Butler Amusements again served as the midway provider bringing in 37 rides total, of which 15 were in a separate Kiddie Land area. Butler had no help from other carnivals, providing 100% of the rides. New to this fair were the **Atlantis Funhouse (Funtec)** and **Cakewalk Funhouse (Hollingsworth)**. The top three grossing rides were the Giant



Butler Amusements midway revenue was up 2% over 2018, making it a record year. Attendance in general was up, which may have contributed to the success **The Chance Yo-Yo** (above right) was one of the more popular rides at the 10-day fair. AT/B.DEREK SHAW; COURTESY SPOKANE COUNTY INTERSTATE FAIR/BEN GURTEL

Wheel (Chance), **Zillerator (Pinfari)** and **Yo-Yo (Chance)**. Midway revenue was 2% over 2018, making it a record year according to Bogue.

Special Promotions included a community food drive on opening day, ladies day — all ladies got in free between 10 a.m. to noon on Sunday, September 8, and Patriot Day on September 11 offered all military and first responders free gate admission.

Grandstand entertainment included two nights of **PRCA (Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association)** rodeo; acts **Shenandoah** with **Restless Heart**, **Trace Adkins**, **Foreigner**,

Pop Evil; truck and tractor pulls and two days of demolition derbies. “The Trace Adkins concert on September 10 and the Foreigner concert on September 11 brought in exceptional mid-week crowds,” said Gurtel. There were other acts popular throughout the grounds. “Fair attendees enjoyed the new specialty pirate high dive show. (**Sinbad Pirate High Dive**). Divers climbed as high as 90 feet in the air to dive into 10 feet of water. The show was performed three times per day and drew hundreds of spectators to each show, some guests watching the show multiple times



while at the fair.”

A first for the fair was a sensory day on Tuesday, September 10. This was designed for fair guests that may be overstimulated by sounds, lights and crowds. “We worked with Butler Amusements to have the rides on without sounds/lights for a four-hour period (noon to 4 p.m.) on Sensory Day. We also created a program/map outlining all activities throughout the grounds that

would be suitable for our guests on Sensory Day,” said Gurtel.

Also new this year was paid parking all day, every day at \$5 per car. “We had previously offered one lot of free parking during weekdays, 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Overall this change was received better than anticipated,” said Gurtel.

A new food item among the 42 stands included **John Dough**, an edible cookie dough booth. This proved to be a big hit with fair attendees. Of course the classic favorite was **The King Corn Dog** from **Fiesta Time Foods**.

“Butler Amusements is always a pleasure to work with. We love our relationship and look forward to many more years of working together,” said Gurtel.

“We had a fantastic new fair manager, Erin Gurtel. We had a very smooth transition and [she] was great to work with,” said Bogue. **Rich Hartzell**, the previous director retired in February. Gurtel took the reins in mid-May.

The Spokane County Interstate Fair provides a local economic impact of more than \$7 million dollars. Since 1952 the fair has been held at the corner of Broadway and Havana Streets, which is also the site of the year-round Expo Center. There has been some type of fair since 1886 at various sites around Spokane.

The 2020 fair occurs September 11-20 with the theme: “Expect the Unexpected.”

•spokanecounty.org



Butler Amusements brought in all 37 rides to the fair site, 15 of which were kiddie rides. COURTESY BUTLER AMUSEMENTS/JESSE BOGUE





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On the Midway: Dreamland Amusements



The 159th Clearfield, Pa., County Fair had a new midway provider this year. Dreamland Amusements brought in 23 rides (above left) for the six-day spot in a Clearfield neighborhood fairground spot. Some of the staff on hand in Clearfield (above center, from left): Tyrell Walton, maintenance; Andrew Muxley, electrician; Jaclyn Shoup, office manager; Wayne Harder, concessions manager and Michael Engel, ride supervisor. Inside the eagle is Reagan Shoup, age one and a half. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

On the Midway: Deggeller Attractions



The Deggeller clan includes at left, from left: Donnie Deggeller, owner; Chane Dunn, office manager/HR; Heidi Pugh, COO; Beau Pugh, midway operations; Cathy Deggeller, owner; Cassidy Pugh, Heidi and Beau's daughter and, in front, Tango, a nine-month-old golden retriever who serves as office morale booster. A new feature on the Deggeller midway in addition to flower planters is blue and pink rubber flooring (right) around all games, ticket boxes and food concessions owned by the carnival. Swisstrax is the manufacturer. Deggeller Attractions brought in a total of 50 rides to the York, Pa., Fair this year. AT/B. DEREK SHAW





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MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

A deadly outbreak of Legionnaires' disease in North Carolina could stem from hot tubs that were on display inside **Davis Event Center** at the **Mountain State Fair**, held at the **Western North Carolina Agricultural Center** in Fletcher, in early September. To date, one person has died among 120 confirmed cases of the airborne lung infection, **North Carolina's Department of Health and Human Services** reported. Another eight people have come down with Pontiac fever, a milder form of the disease, and 80 patients in all have been hospitalized. Other fairs across the state are also taking necessary precautions, including the **Dixie Classic Fair** in Winston-Salem. They did not use any misting fans or decorative water fountains. They also did not allow attendees to bring personal misting fans.

The Board of Directors of the **National Independent Concessionaires Association (NICA)** recently announced that **Rey O'Day** has been named executive director. O'Day previously served NICA in various capacities including help with the facilitation and implementation of NICA's long and short-term strategic goals. O'Day is the 2016 inductee into the NICA Hall of Fame. O'Day teaches "Principles of Food and Beverage" and "Guest Services" for the **IAFE** Institute of Fair Management, serves as an IAFE Trustee on the IAFE Education Foundation, participates on the **WFA** Industry Standards committee, and instructs and mentors students in the University of California – Riverside's Event Management Program.

She is a frequent speaker and trainer at industry gatherings.

"Rey's diverse industry experience, proven leadership, professionalism and vast knowledge of all facets of the industry make her the ideal Executive Director for NICA," stated NICA President **Kathy Ross**. "I am honored to direct the work of NICA with our Board, staff, membership and industry partners by being 'dedicated to strengthening relationships with the Fair, Festival and Special Events Industries through effective communication, education, benefits, leadership, and solutions,'" stated O'Day.

The future of the nine-day **Prince William County Fair**, Manassas, Virginia, lies in the balance. **Prince William Veterans Farm Club**, owner of the 86-acre fairgrounds has the property listed for sale, citing increasing taxes, insurance and security expenses. The club has hosted the fair from inception in 1949 when it was known as the **Dairy Show**. The early to mid-August fair saw nearly 50,000 go through the turnstiles this year. **Deggeller Attractions** has been the midway provider for more than 40 of the fair's 70 years in existence. They brought in 28 rides this year.

The **New Jersey State Fair/Sussex County Farm and Horse Show**, Augusta,

is being shortened by two days to an eight-day run in 2020. The major reason cited was budget savings in several areas including security and less stress on volunteers to staff displays and activities. Initially there was discussion by the 17-member board of adopting a nine-day run to include two full weekends, however the belief was an 11 p.m. closing on Saturday would suffice and give both the contracted attractions and volunteers a full day on Sunday to clean up, instead of a 5 p.m. close, as in the past.

The shorter fair starts August 1, ending on August 8, with **Reithoffer Shows** providing the carnival midway.

The **Amherst County Fair**, Virginia, which has used a field near **Sweet Briar College** the past couple of years, is changing venues in 2020. The four-day fair will move to **Winton Farm** on Virginia route 151, a few miles north of Amherst. Along with that, a new fair director will be hired. Winton, a country club and golf course, offers more parking, reduces the amount of sheriff's deputies needed and does not require bus shuttles, which were the norm at the college tract. Fayetteville, North Carolina's **Michaels Amusements** will be heading up the midway operations of the fair. 2020 dates will not be known until after the first of the year, however organizers hope for it to occur in mid-August (as it has been in the past) or early September.

Most fairs of its size would not have survived. The final remarks of the nine-year term President of the **Bloomsburg, (Pennsylvania) Fair**, **Paul Reichart**, reiterated the magnitude of the fair's strength and stability. It was 2011 when Reichart, in his first year at the helm, had to cancel the fair due to tremendous flooding from Tropical Storm Lee of the Susquehanna River. This was just two weeks before the nine-day event was to commence.

When all was said and done, the fair was nearly three million dollars in debt. Other fairs would have thrown in the towel, not able to sustain the huge financial burden. Thanks to Reichart and the rest of the board member-driven fair, the losses were turned around in four years with a surplus now built-in for any potential natural disasters in the future. Sponsorships and other financial support were beefed up tremendously.

Reichart leaves the top spot with a successful final fair as attendance was up 3% with 411,869 total attendees. Two sold out shows took place the last two evenings with 1980s bands **Loverboy** and **Foreigner**, and **Toby Keith** performed the following night. The second Friday, September 27, set a new attendance record with 65,194 on the grounds.

The 165th edition returns September 26 to October 3, 2020, with **Amusements of America** returning for its third year at the helm.

On the Midway: Rosedale Attractions

Suburban Baltimore-based Rosedale Attractions brought 28 of its 40 rides (adjacent right) to the Mt. Airy still date. The operation functioned without any H2B workers.

Rosedale Attractions principals include far right, from left: Ray Farrow, Joey Gaylin, Aiden Gaylin, Katelyn Farrow and Tom Gaylin. The company has been in operation since 1983.

AT/B. DEREK SHAW



Lee Regional Fair draws good crowds



SANFORD, N.C. — The Lee Regional Fair, Sept. 10-15, drew an estimated crowd of 28,000 persons, according to Fair Director Bob Nelson (above middle). Big Rock Amusements, Frankenmuth, Mich., provided the midway with 30 rides, including a new spectacle called The Beast (Freak Out) from KMG. The show also presented a rare, Allan Herschell Sky Wheel. The fair is sponsored by the Sanford Lions Club. COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON


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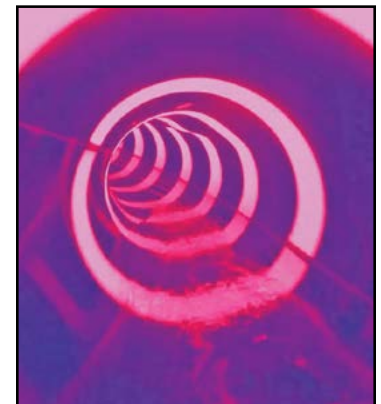
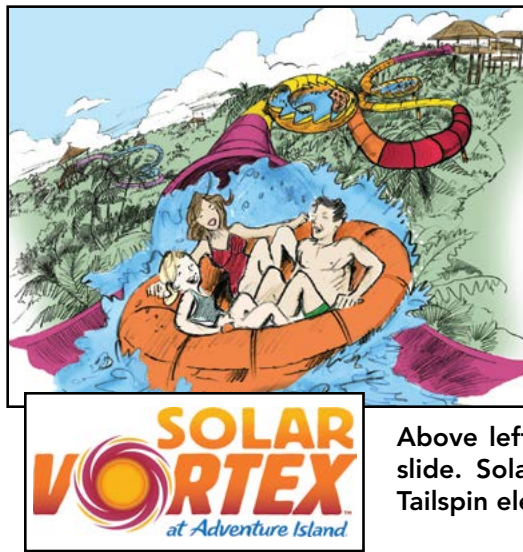
Adventure Island Tampa Bay to turn up the heat with Solar Vortex

AT: David Fake

Special to Amusement Today

TAMPA, Fla. — Adventure Island Tampa Bay has partnered with WhiteWater to bring Solar Vortex to the Florida water park in 2020. Opening in the spring, Solar Vortex will provide guests 48 inches and taller with the opportunity to spin and splash on America's first water slide to incorporate dual-tailspin elements. The family raft slide will replace Key West Rapids, a family raft ride that opened in 1995 and closed at the end of September and is currently being dismantled. The new slide will stand 55 feet tall and will combine high-banking rotations and rapid descents that send sliders on a swirling journey through three enclosed slide sections in addition to the two exposed tailspin elements.

The slides, three enclosed sections will feature WhiteWater's dynamic



Above left is an artist's rendering of Adventure Island's enclosed Solar Vortex family raft slide. Solar Vortex will feature three sections of AquaLucent patterned tubes and two Tailspin elements. COURTESY ADVENTURE ISLAND; WHITEWATER

AquaLucent design. At a recent media event announcing the new waterslide, Brian Kilpatrick, vice president of Adventure Island, described the AquaLucent features as "harnessing the power of the Florida sun into colorful patterns that shine through the slide while riders reach speeds of up to 20

miles per hour while traveling on two to four passenger rafts." This type of feature is a burgeoning trend for enclosed waterslides and allows parks to create unique and exciting lighting effects with nothing more than the slide structure and the sun, while most enclosed waterslides consist of only dark tunnels.

WhiteWater's website describes its tailspin elements as having been "designed to deliver a thrilling ride experience and high impact presence while also being affordable to purchase and maintain. Combining the high-banking rotations of a bowl with the rapid descent of a flume, the open tailspin feature gives rid-

ers a chance to see the journey that lays ahead as they're pinned high on the outside wall as they spiral downwards." At present, there is only one WhiteWater installation featuring a single tailspin element. It is at Whirlin' Waters Adventure Waterpark in North Charleston, S.C.

•adventureisland.com

Grand Texas opens Big Rivers Waterpark

AT: Jeffrey Seifert

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NEW CANEY, Texas — First announced in 2013, the on-again-off-again **Grand Texas** project appears to have finally opened — at least parts of it. **Big Rivers Waterpark** is an 80-acre water and adventure park housed within the sprawling 632-acre amusement park-anchored development known as Grand Texas. It opened this summer after much anticipation and hiccups over the past few years.

A combination of problems with infrastructure funding, inclement weather and engineering difficulties caused multiple delays with the water park which pushed back the projected opening from 2015 until this past summer.

A false start last year disappointed Houstonians, leaving many to wonder if the water park was ever going to open. In April of 2018, the park announced

a June 29, 2018, grand opening and began selling tickets and season passes. However, on June 19, 2018, that planned opening — just 10 days away — was cancelled. Weather-related issues kept pushing the date back, until it was decided to just wait until 2019. The park promised to honor all the tickets and passes purchased in 2018.

The massive Grand Texas complex is still under construction, but by the time this project is completed — according to plans — it is to boast a theme park, sports complex, several hotels, and an outlet mall in addition to the properties already open. The **Grand Texas RV Resort** and **Speedsportz Racing Park** opened in August and December of 2016, respectively. That was followed by the **Gator Bayou Adventure Park** in November 2018. Along with a ropes course, climbing wall, ziplines, petting zoo and the alligator exhibit, Gator Bayou had a water park of sorts with an Aquaglide floating obstacle course on

one of the park's lakes.

In 2019, **Terre Albert** was brought on as chief operating officer, and he has overseen a soft opening since Memorial Day weekend. Six waterslides, and several children's attractions opened gradually after the soft opening. Big Rivers is now 100 percent operational after opening its last major ride the weekend of July 18.

The park is located just nine miles north of **Bush Intercontinental Airport** and considers itself part of the Houston Metropolitan Area. Houston has been without a theme park since **AstroWorld** closed in 2005. The Houston area is already home to several water parks such as **Hurricane Harbor Splashtown** in nearby Spring, and **Typhoon Texas Waterpark** in Katy.

Big Rivers features several high-profile attractions and waterslides supplied by **WhiteWater West** of British Columbia. As with most things Texas, the new attractions are marketed with plenty of superlatives. Boca Chica Bay Wave Pool is said to have the tallest waves in all of Texas, Rio Grand River is said to be the largest in the Houston area and the Gator Splash interactive play structure boasts more than 300 water play elements — the largest in Texas.

WhiteWater slides include two, multi-person raft rides: Storm Surge — a Manta, with an enclosed river lead-in and Comal Crush, a winding tube slide that shares the same tower. Body slides Pecos Plunge, Sabine Scream and Frio Falls include an enclosed tunnel slide, and two speed slides — one with a speed bump, the second a steep drop. Rounding out the body slide selection is COLORado River Racer, a multi-hued, six-lane mat racer Whizzard that begins with a DNA style twist.

Although some of the Grand Texas attractions operate all year round, Big Rivers Waterpark is seasonal, operating from May to September.



A large children's area and massive RainFortress 6 dominate the center of the park. The lazy river surrounds that with the high-profile slides at opposite corners.

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Making waves: WaveTek celebrates 50 years of supplying wave pools

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

COHOES, N.Y. — Wave pools have become so commonplace at water parks around the world, it is hard to remember a time when they didn't exist. **WaveTek**, the leading designer and manufacturer of wave generation equipment in the industry is celebrating 50 years of making waves at pools all over the world.

Historical research indicates that people have been frolicking in artificial waves since the late 1800s. Bavarian King Ludwig II, famous for his extravagant artistic and architectural projects, such as the world-renowned Neuschwanstein Castle, was also fascinated with moving water. In addition to the elaborate fountains that surround his castles, the Venus Grotto, an underground labyrinth with aquatic passageways, featured an electrified "wave maker" of which very little is known. The subterranean pool became Ludwig's place to escape the pressures of kingdom. It's said that he liked to be rowed around in a golden boat to the relaxing undulation of his machine waves.

The Germans again demonstrated a knack for wave generation at the International Hygiene Exhibition in Dresden in 1911. That system was relocated in 1912 to the **Bilzbad Outdoor Pool** in Radebeul, Germany, where it continues to operate to this day.

Although the exact history is debatable, the appearance of the first contemporary wave pool in North America is typically recognized as Wakiki Beach at **Big Surf Waterpark** in Tempe, Arizona, which opened in 1969. That system produced waves by pumping water to a specified height in a reservoir and then releasing it through underwater gates. The water would then break over an adjacent baffle, resulting in waves that reached up to five feet in height and could be ridden with a conventional surfboard.

Phil Dexter is credited as the inventor and builder of that



Calypso Bay Wave Pool at Six Flags Over Georgia (above) demonstrates a wave pool's ability to keep large groups of people wet, cool and entertained. Even indoor water parks (inset) find room for a wave pool, such as this one located at Kalahari Resort in Sandusky, Ohio.
COURTESY WAVETEK/ADG



first wave pool. Dexter, a construction engineer and entrepreneur from Phoenix, conceived the idea in the mid-1960s. In 1966 he experimented with wave-making machine models in his backyard, then built a larger working model at an abandoned pool hall the following year. Two years later he opened up that first wave pool at Big Surf. In 2013 Dexter was inducted into the **World Waterpark Association** Hall of Fame. His wave pool received the designation of Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark by the **American Society of Mechanical Engineers**. The pool was recognized by the Society for being the first inland surfing facility in North America. Although Big Surf brought the California surf culture to Arizona just as the **Beach Boys** were popularizing surfing, the park soon realized there were not enough surfers in Arizona to sustain it. The waves were reduced to accommodate

swimmers and body surfers. Eventually slides were added, and a full-fledged water park grew up around the wave pool.

Forty-five years after opening Big Surf, Phil Dexter passed away in 2014 at the age of 87.

WaveTek, a company located in Mansfield, Ohio, engineered and built the first pneumatically powered wave pool in Decatur, Alabama, at Point Mallard Park in 1970, marking what would become the primary technology used in wave pools throughout North America.

Around this same time, **Aquatic Development Group (ADG)** developed the Aquawave wave system which, building off the technology created for the original pools, advanced and engineered the first tsunami wave system capable of producing large recreational waves. Much like the original, the tsunami system would produce a large wave every few minutes. The wall of water would come barreling toward guests who would ride out the wave and anxiously wait for the next to come along. ADG was the first to start manufacturing those systems with stainless steel construction and employed the use of precision computer numerical control (CNC) machining. As a result, ADG began producing wave systems that proved to be more durable and consistent in wave pattern size and timing.

In late 1987, ADG acquired WaveTek and, with that, helped

bring to market the first patented variable wave system technology, an innovative technological breakthrough that allowed for multiple wave patterns to be produced in one pool, an operation that is currently the standard practice in most water parks throughout the world. These ubiquitous water park wave pools are the ones that create four to five second interval rolling waves or agitated diamond peaks that are adored by the majority of water park patrons.

Offering both pneumatic and high-performance hydraulic system technology, ADG quickly became the authorities in designing and building wave pools in the U.S. and overseas. To date there are more than 420 WaveTek installations around the world, and WaveTek waves can be found in more than 90 percent of the water parks in operation throughout North America. According to ADG, WaveTek innovations include the first variable wave pattern programmer, the first tsunami solitary wave, the first six-foot pneumatic parallel wave, the first river waves and the first variable wave pattern programmer — the patented VaraWave technology which is able to produce up to eight different wave patterns.

In 2020, coming almost full-circle from the days of the first hydraulically powered high-performance pool, ADG's WaveTek system will power a new Surf Lagoon with an advanced pneumatic wave system designed

specifically for surfing.

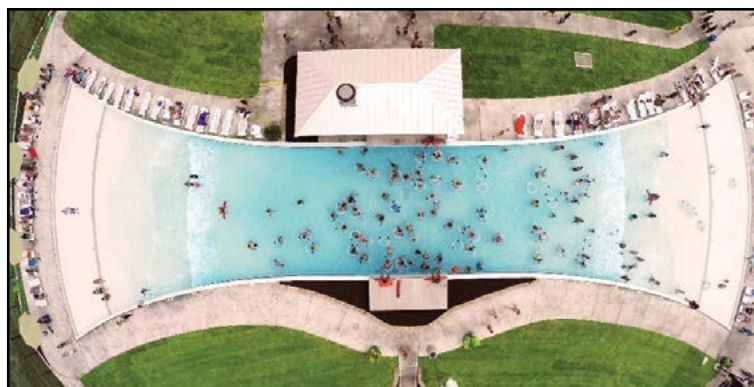
Although Big Surf struggled to find enough surfers to keep the location profitable, wave pool technology has evolved a lot since that time. Man-made surfing parks have noticeably taken off in recent years with new facilities opening everywhere from Asia to North America.

ADG's WaveTek systems have been used to provide wave systems for a multitude of applications, producing waves for recreational wave pools and rivers, to specialty-designed wave systems and pools for Hollywood productions. The stormy ocean scenes in *Life of Pi* and *Master and Commander* were produced by WaveTek systems. WaveTek has also found its way into rescue training pools for the U.S. Coast Guard and waves for sea life exhibits in zoos and aquariums.

WaveTek currently offers nine different wave system options for custom wave pools and rivers of all shapes and sizes, from 18-inch pools for toddlers to wave pools with six-to-eight-foot waves in pools as large as 64,000 square feet for maximum capacity and performance.

ADG continues to develop applications for its wave generation systems, combining creativity in design with innovative technology to produce a wide array of both river and wave pool sizes, shapes and system configurations. Recent developments include the first dual-beach/dual-entry wave pools, split wave pools, and specialty surfing pools such as the Leading Edge and Brass Ring awarded boogie boarding surf pool built at Colorado's **Water World** in 2016. Wave systems for rivers range from gentle waves for lazy rivers, to the more adventurous fast or swimmable rivers and even tidal wave river options.

Humans have always been attracted to the ocean. Whether one seeks the excitement of larger waves or the gentle bobbing of smaller peaks, getting tossed around in the waves is good clean fun. Wave pools, taking their cue from nature, offer sanitized, regimented revisions of the wild, ocean surfs created by nature — free from sharks, jellyfish, or other pesky ocean creatures. They are the among the most popular attractions at a water park, appealing to all members of the family. Their ability to simultaneously handle large crowds of swimmers often makes a wave pool the centerpiece of the water park. It's no wonder that wave pools have become commonplace at parks and aquatic facilities the world over.



ADG's Twin Tides dual entry wave pool netted the company a WWA Leading Edge Award in 2016. COURTESY WAVETEK/ADG

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Before



After

Six Flags Hurricane Harbor Phoenix reveals expansion for 2020

AT: Dean Lamanna

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GLENDAL, Ariz. — Phoenix metro area fun-seekers will be able to enjoy a tropical island-style respite next summer when **Six Flags Hurricane Harbor Phoenix** unveils the largest expansion it has seen in years.

Covering nearly 42,000 square feet near the water park's Coconut Bay and Adventure River, **Paradise Island** will be centered on a 12,000-square-foot activity pool holding more than a quarter of a million gallons of water. Numerous interactive elements, including floating lily pad walk courses, a water volleyball court, water basketball hoops and a beach-like zero-depth entry area, will be located in and around the pool.

The project additionally will provide new lounge seating, shaded areas and restrooms.

"Hurricane Harbor is the premier water park destination in Arizona, and we are



committed to offering thrilling new experiences that can be shared with family and friends," said **Donald Spiller**, general manager. "Paradise Island will feature multiple new water play activities and relaxing water fun. It's sure to be a favorite destination for guests of all ages."

The expansion represents the first major improvement of the former **Wet 'N' Wild** property by Grand Prairie, Texas-based **Six Flags Entertainment Corp.**, which acquired the operational lease rights to the park from operator **Premier Parks, LLC**, and park owner **EPR Properties** in the summer of 2018. The deal also included



Centered on a 12,000-square-foot, 275,000-gallon pool offering multiple activities and surrounded by new lounge seating, shaded areas and restrooms, **Paradise Island** will be the largest expansion at **Six Flags Hurricane Harbor** in years.

COURTESY SIX FLAGS HURRICANE HARBOR

four other Premier / EPR properties around the country and made Six Flags the largest water park operator in North America.

The Phoenix facility was rebranded earlier this year in time for its season opening in March. Other upgrades included new signage, renovated dining areas and shops, and Caribbean theming — all designed to

give guests "a bigger, better, wetter island getaway experience," Spiller said. At 35 acres, it is the state's largest water park.

Located within **Adobe Dam Regional Park**, which is home to the **Phoenix Kart Racing Assn.**, several golf and sports facilities, and other attractions, **Six Flags Hurricane Harbor** offers more than 30 slides, rides and



attractions — including the 700,000-gallon **Hurricane Bay** (formerly **Monsoon Bay**) wave pool and **Bahama Blaster** (formerly **Maximum Velocity**), which the park describes as North America's first dueling water coaster.

Construction on **Paradise Island** was scheduled to get underway this fall. The park's 2019 season ended Oct. 13.

• sixflags.com/phoenix

The much-ballyhooed **Dreamworks Water Park** at the **American Dream Meadowlands** retail and entertainment complex under construction in the **Meadowlands Sports Complex** in East Rutherford, New Jersey, finally has an opening date. First floated as a concept nearly two decades ago, the complex has begun opening in phases. The indoor water park with its record-breaking attractions is scheduled to open on November 27, 2019. The massive water park, with more than 40 waterslides and 15 attractions is said to be the second largest indoor water park in the world. Other record-breaking attractions include a 1.5-acre indoor wave pool, a 142-foot body slide with a 50-foot freefall, and the world's longest hydro-magnetic water coaster.

After 10 months of work, construction has been completed on the new water park at the **Palos de la Frontera Municipal Sports Center**, Huelva, Spain. The space, which replaces the city's municipal pool, includes two new outdoor swimming pools, a large beach-style area with quartz sand, a children's interactive play area and a zero-depth playground. While the park was getting ready for its grand opening, officials invited school groups and members of the municipal center's sports groups to help preview the park's attractions. The entire operation is monitored by an intelligent system which provides real-time information on water levels, water quality, water temperature and even the cleanliness of the pump's filters. The entire system can be activated or deactivated by an operator using a touch-screen control panel.

Selwyn Aquatic Center in New Zealand has begun work on a NZ\$13.8 million upgrade and



NEWS SPLASH

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expansion. With the aquatic center being one of the most popular destinations in the district, citizens have repeatedly requested an increase in capacity. The expansion will meet growing demand at the popular facility. Plans include a new 10-lane, 25-meter lap pool and additional changing rooms, including five new family changing rooms. When not used for lap swimming the new pool will provide increased space for aquafitness, casual swimming and other water activities. The extension is expected to be completed late 2020.

Ocean Breeze Waterpark in Virginia Beach, will feature clever touches on its **ProSlide** Mammoth River when it opens in 2020. Operation **Splashdown** is to be a tribute to those who serve and will feature a red, white and blue 70-foot tower and star-spangled rafts.

According to the description, riders first enter a dark, enclosed opening with a series of unpredictable twists and turns, leading to exciting drops and sharp curves. The raft will then shoot through a tunnel, blast through a wildly fun S-shaped waterway where the "crew" will catch some hang time along high bank walls before finally, splashing down.

Waterplay of Kelowna, Canada, has released a new line of interactive splash pad features. **Water Weavers** put a new spin on the typical water sprayer by adding a spinning water head. It offers a simple design with remarkable play value at an economical price

point. The spinable water head releases an S-shaped stream of water that differentiates it from most spray heads. Once kids discover that they can spin the device, they are immediately captivated. Waterplay is offering three different versions: a low-to-the ground sprayer that releases a stream that kids can jump over, an overhead multi-point sprayer that produces a visually stunning shower of water, and a second overhead sprayer that shoots a double stream of water into the air.

The city of Marshfield, Wisconsin, has launched a fundraising campaign in order to build a \$6.5 million outdoor aquatic center. The new center is to replace **Hefko Pool**, which was built in 1933 and hasn't been renovated since 1974. An inspection in 2016 found cracking in the concrete pool deck and heavy pump corrosion. The out-of-date design also has limited access for people with disabilities.

Of the \$6.5 million needed for the project the city has committed \$3 million with the remaining \$3.5 million coming from private donations. An independent consulting group determined there is enough interest in fundraising for the aquatic center despite a number of other recent projects being funded through private donations. Approximately \$500,000 had already been pledged before the campaign was even officially announced.

Plans for the new aquatic center include two pools, two diving boards, three slides, climbing wall, lazy river, full concession stand, family changing rooms, private changing stalls and a reservable shelter. The city council set a project completion date of August 2022 but indicated the center could be completed as early as summer 2021.

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BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

► Icon Attractions opens St. Louis Wheel — page 61 / Silverwood hosts Golden Ticket Awards — page 62

Give Kids The World benefits from revitalized Coasting for Kids

AT: Tim Baldwin

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KISSIMMEE, Fla. — Give Kids The World Village, the beloved vacation resort that provides cost-free vacations to families with critically ill children, has received overwhelming support from coaster fans. Coasting for Kids is a fundraising event where enthusiasts ride coasters and raise donations that benefit the Give Kids The World facility.

"The events this year exceeded all of our expectations. We knew the event was well received in its first run, and there was a demand for it to make a return," said Steven Amos, director of development, Give Kids The World.

With the encouragement of enthusiast organizations and Give Kids The World, numerous parks stepped forward to play host. Participating parks were Busch Gardens Williamsburg, Frontier City, The Great Escape,

Indiana Beach, Kennywood, Legoland Florida, Quassy Amusement Park, Sesame Place, Silverwood Theme Park, Six Flags America, Six Flags Darien Lake, Six Flags Fiesta Texas, Six Flags Over Georgia, Six Flags Over Texas and Story Land.

The first series of Coasting for Kids events began in 2012. In time, the event raised more than \$700,000. However, in recent years, the event lost some of its momentum and many of its host parks. A renewed focus was achieved last fall, and the success of the 2019 events has surpassed expectations.

"ACE was very proud to assist in recruiting parks," said David Lipnicky, liaison for American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE). "It is amazing that Give Kids The World enlisted 15 great parks across the U.S. and nine wonderful corporate sponsors when many had little hope that Coasting for Kids could ever make a comeback. What really blows me away is that by June

we had to double our initial goal to \$100,000, and this year's events exceeded that revised goal by more than 37.5 percent."

Amos said, "The most surprising part this year was seeing that even though the event season lasted six months, the enthusiasm never tapered." The final event took place at Kennywood in September. That site raised the most with more than \$43,000. Overall, all park events combined raised \$137,577.

"It was great to be a part of it," said Nick Paradise, director of public relations, Kennywood. "The weather worked out to give rides on The Steel Curtain. You don't realize until you have an event how many people have benefited from GKTW. We had people coming from many places. It meant a ton to us. It was really special. We always love to give back to the community and great causes. Just from our event alone we were able to fulfill seven wishes."



Coasting for Kids at Kennywood (above) raised more than \$43,000. Six Flags America (inset) was one of seven Six Flags parks that participated as hosts.

COURTESY
GIVE KIDS THE WORLD

Coaster fans participating had to commit to a minimum of raising \$100. At higher levels of donations, swag items were earned, but enthusiasts were all in just for raising money for a cause they believed in.



"There is something incredible about getting a group of people together who can take that passion of coasters and have it make such an incredible impact," said Amos.

•gktw.org

HauntCon looks to scare up larger numbers in The Big Easy

AT: Dean Lamanna

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NEW ORLEANS — The Haunted Attraction National Trade Show & Convention (better known as HauntCon) is anticipating a major "boo"-st in ghosts, goblins and other delightful frights — not to mention attendees — when it returns to the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center Jan. 17-19.

HauntCon bills itself as the leading networking, learning and sourcing event for haunted attractions, theme park haunts, home haunters and owner / operators of escape rooms and agritainment — spotlighting products and services ranging from makeup effects and scare concepts to business and promotional strategies. For the third consecutive year, the show will be co-located with the Halloween & Party Expo.

The combined event's 2019 edition last January, also held in New Orleans, doubled the prior year's exhibition space and saw increased attendance from buyers representing 37 states as well as Canada, Australia and the U.K. The higher floor traffic was attributed to partnerships HauntCon has developed with numerous regional associations, including Alabama Haunters



HauntCon is expecting greater attendance and vendor sales at its 2020 show.

COURTESY HAUNTCON

Alliance, Arizona Haunters, Canadian Haunters Assn., Chicago Haunt Builders, East Coast Haunt Club, Northwest Haunters Assn. and Ohio Haunters Assn.

"We are so thrilled to see the positive momentum and continued growth of HauntCon," said Liz Irving, senior vice president of marketing for the event. "Leading up to [the 2019] show, we involved the haunt community in all aspects of planning to ensure that HauntCon was the best resource for their business."

The 2020 HauntCon is expected to feature more than 400 exhibitors and welcome 3,500 professionals representing all 50 states plus Washington, D.C., as well as 51 countries. The figures reflect the robust health of the Halloween and haunt market, which according to HauntCon is \$9 billion in the U.S. alone. Ongoing growth and success have also been enjoyed by HauntCon's West Coast counterpart, **Midsummer Scream** (Amusement Today, October 2019), one of HauntCon's many industry supporters and sponsors.

The upcoming show will offer more than 70 educational sessions, panel discussions and workshops, with subjects running the gamut from creative scare techniques and performance tips to safety. Highlights will include behind-the-scenes haunted tours in the city, a costume ball and — in partnership with the Haunted Attraction Network — the launch of Haunters to Watch, an awards program recognizing those who are pushing the boundaries of the industry.

HauntCon is owned by Trumbull, Connecticut-based Clarion UX. For registration, accommodations and a complete event schedule, visit the show's website.

•hauntcon.com

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The final rides at Cincinnati's Coney Island

Coney Island amusement park officials decided in mid-September to close down the entire ride side of the park.

On Sept. 21, park guests were able to enjoy their final journey on the park's amusement rides. Coney Island's amusement park has been a fixture in Cincinnati, Ohio, for over 130 years with generations having enjoyed many of the park's nostalgic attractions. The final day of rides coincided with the park's popular Fire Up The Night fireworks display, ending the evening with a memorable bang. Rides 4 U is selling the rides for Coney Island. The Racing Rockets (bottom right) and Turtle Parade were purchased on the first day rides were available for sale by the Cincinnati Circus Company.

COURTESY
MICHELLE MOMANY



Six Flags purchase bid for Cedar Fair rejected

GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — Attractions industry buzz tripped into overdrive in early October when news broke that Six Flags Entertainment Corp. (NYSE: SIX) was preparing a cash-and-stock purchase offer for fellow theme park operator Cedar Fair, L.P. (NYSE: FUN; doing business as Cedar Fair Entertainment Co.) of Sandusky, Ohio.

Ultimately, a deal did not come to pass.

Stock market analysts and theme park fans alike commented noisily when word of Six Flags' intent hit social media, with the majority of opinions leaning negative. The online news arm of Yahoo rounded up a few thoughts from the former.

"We tag this at much less than a 50% probability and do see more investor risk vs. reward should this deal happen," said Brett Andress of KeyBlanc Capital Markets.

Timothy Condor, an analyst with Wells Fargo, was a bit blunter. "We believe the combination is a stretch," he said.

The two market observers also noted the companies' "cultural differences" and reportedly questioned the wisdom of Six Flags making



the move with the impending retirement by the end of February 2020 of its CEO, Jim Reid-Anderson. Both Six Flags, the world's largest theme park company, and Cedar Fair have posted admirable stock performance results during 2019.

Reuters reported on Oct. 4 that Cedar Fair rejected its rival's \$4 billion bid as "inadequate." As part of the approach, Six Flags was said to have dangled management roles for Cedar Fair executives in a merged company. But Cedar Fair felt the offer, in addition to being not high enough, "did not compensate [its] shareholders for giving up on the company's tax-advantageous publicly traded partnership," according to Reuters.

—Dean Lamanna




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•SOLD! 1966 Allan-Herschell Helicopters	\$15,000
•SOLD! 1970 Grover-Watkins Rockets	\$12,000
•SOLD! 2011 Visa Swing-A-Round	\$20,000
•SOLD! 2002 Hampton-Turtle-Parade	\$12,500
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•1993 Kilinski Giant Slide	\$29,000
•1957 Eli Bridge Scrambler	\$29,000
•1970 Allan Herschell Flying Bobs	\$69,000
•SOLD! 1974 Pinfari-Python-Coaster	\$129,000
•2008 Visa River Runner	\$179,000
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•1973 Grover Watkins Tempest	\$29,000
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Women INFLUENCE

A view from the top...

Roxanne Pope has been with the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions** (IAAPA) since 2001. She began as the assistant to the president and is now executive affairs and the Washington, D.C., office manager.

IAAPA is a global trade association representing a diverse and ever-changing attractions industry. It has now relocated its headquarters to Orlando, Florida, from Alexandria, Virginia, but is maintaining an office there. Pope remained in the Virginia office.

Accomplishments and affiliations...

- Involved in all aspects of IAAPA
- Regularly volunteers with organizations to help feed other families

Roxanne Pope finds the world at her fingertips

Roxanne Pope laughs when she says, "I haven't had to look for a job in 30 years."

She doesn't seem to realize exactly how much that one statement reveals about herself. The reason Pope hasn't had to enter a competitive job market in 30 years is because co-workers started recommending jobs for her.

The first time that happened was in 1991 when she was living and working in Washington D.C. in human resources for a U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) contractor. Up until that point, she had worked for several DOD contractors.

She was working for a Colonel Robert Suhosky. He talked to her about a position at the nonprofit Association of Career and Technical Education (ACTE). He thought it would be a good fit for her.

"I went for my interview and the personnel person asked me to take a typing test," Pope said. "I told her that I must have come for the wrong job and left. They called me back and I met with the then Executive Director Charlie Buzzell. He took me to lunch and offered me the job that afternoon."

Her stint at ACTE lasted for 10 years. During that time, Buzzell left and Bret Lovejoy came on board in the executive director position.

In 2001, Lovejoy applied for the position of president and CEO at IAAPA following John Graff's retirement. He was hired and during that transition to IAAPA, he and Pope discussed her going with him. It was a hard decision for her. She enjoyed working with Lovejoy, but she also enjoyed her job at ACTE.

"I decided to make the move," Pope said. "That was my leap of faith. As it turned out, IAAPA wasn't a good

fit for Bret, but it was a great fit for me. I can't imagine being anywhere else."

Pope was born and raised in Cumberland, Maryland, just about 140 miles northwest of Washington, D.C.

She came from a family of workers. Her father, John Stephens, served in the U.S. Navy until an injury at sea brought him home. He then worked for Kelly Springfield Tire Co. in Cumberland until he retired in 1975.

Her mother, Frances Tucker, and father divorced when Pope was young. Her mom ended up moving to Fort Worth, Texas. She retired in 1995 from Stratoflex, a company that made circuit boards and fittings for aircraft.

Pope remained in Maryland with her father and paternal grandparents. She landed a department store job when she was 14 years old.

When in high school, her dream was to become an airline attendant and travel the world.

"I even had an interview," she said. "When I told my father, he looked at me and said, 'You need to go to school.'"

Pope ended up taking his advice and attended a local business school, Catherman's Business School. She also married, and soon she and her husband had a daughter named Tamisa. The marriage didn't last long, but a long friendship with her ex-husband has lasted.

In 1973, Pope and her daughter moved to Washington D.C. That was when she began working for several DOD contractors, which led to her position of assistant to the president at IAAPA.

"I was the gatekeeper to Bret," she said. "By being that, I began to meet so many people and I learned so much. I began attending board meet-



Roxanne Pope
Executive Affairs, Office Manager
International Association of
Amusement Parks and Attractions
Washington, D.C.

ings and other meetings at the headquarters. Bret told me that there were some I really didn't need to go to, but I really wanted to. People were so passionate. It was fascinating."

She learned about the park industry, the parks and how they operated. She continued to talk to and respond to the members, helping the best she could.

She remembers walking into her first expo.

"That trade show is like a first Christmas over and over again. You can find anything from peanuts to security all in the same place."

She vividly remembers her first summer meeting that was set for Cedar Point, Sandusky, Ohio, in 2001. She had arrived at the airport in D.C. the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, to make her way to the park when the hijacked airplanes hit the World Trade Towers in New York City. She was at the airport when the third hijacked plane hit the Pentagon.

"There was so much panic," Pope said. "Some of our staff were stranded at Cedar Point."

Pope has seen IAAPA services triple and, even in some cases, quadruple since she came on board. She has seen large parks get larger and has seen small mom and pop parks become a success.

"I feel so proud of them," she said. "Working at IAAPA is not just a job for me. They are my family. I think you have to give of yourself to be successful."

IAAPA has given her support in many ways, but perhaps the most important is the support she has received after her daughter was diagnosed with Lupus 16 years ago.

"Her Lupus is very advanced," Pope said. "I have almost lost her three times. IAAPA has allowed me to spend time with her and that means everything."

She also was able to stay in the Alexandria, Virginia, office when IAAPA began its headquarter transition to Orlando, Florida.

And, by the way, she has and continues to travel the world.

—Pam Sherborne

ON THE MOVE

Wavre, Belgium-based interactive technology and show control software company **Alterface** has named **Gillian Basso** chief information officer. Basso, who holds degrees in computer science, interactivity and artificial intelligence, will lead the software division and work closely with the IP and creative departments in leading the software division — including the streamlining of Alterface's Salto show control software to support more immersive and customized experiences. He has actively participated in several research programs, including one led by Alterface exploring the use of augmented reality in park visitor experiences.

**Basso**

Fun Spot America Theme Parks, headquartered in Orlando, Florida, has hired **John Chidester** as vice president of marketing. Chidester is responsible for media planning, branding and elevating attendance at the newest Fun Spot location in Fayetteville, Georgia. An amusement industry veteran with nearly 30 years of experience in theme park and water park management, including more than 20 years with **Holiday World & Splashin' Safari** in Santa Claus, Indiana, Chidester most recently served as national marketing and sales leader for **Crayola Experience**, where he oversaw brand development, new center openings, ad agency selection, media plans, and all marketing and sales teams.

**Chidester**

Skokie, Illinois-based arcade games maker **Raw Thrills, Inc.**, has promoted **Brandon Cook** to domestic sales executive. He reports to **Mark Struhs**, global sales manager. Before joining the company as marketing and sales associate in July 2018, Cook worked as sales director for **ADP**, **CDW** and the cloud software firm **Xero**, where he coached sales teams to maximize their potential. He has deep roots in the amusement industry and is a longtime gamer who wrote game reviews with legendary brothers **Zach Sharpe** and **Josh Sharpe** for *Play Meter* magazine in the early 2000s.

**Cook**

Jessica Correa has joined **Urban Air Adventure Park** of Dallas in the newly created position of chief marketing officer. Correa comes to Urban Air after more than four years with **Planet Fitness**, where she served as senior vice president of marketing, and more than 12 years with **Royal Caribbean Intl.** During her time with Planet Fitness, Correa was responsible for developing integrated marketing programs and innovative experiences across a range of channels, driving revenue growth. In her new role, she will oversee all aspects of marketing, sales, in-park revenue and innovation for Urban Air, which has more than 267 locations now open or under construction.

**Correa**

Toronto-based **Millennial Esports Corp.** has appointed **Darren Cox** as CEO and president. The founder of **Nissan** and **Sony's GT Academy** and the creative force behind the **World's Fastest Gamer** competition, Cox has spent more than two decades immersed in the automotive, motorsport and gaming industries, earning the moniker "The Godfather of Esports Racing." He made his mark in the motorsport industry as global motorsport director for Nissan and head of global sales and marketing for the **Nissan Motorsport** brand. During his time with Nissan, Cox was responsible for the groundbreaking GT Academy program (2008-2015), turning **PlayStation** gamers into international racing drivers for the Japanese manufacturer.

**Cox**

Production Resource Group, LLC (PRG), a New York-based global provider of entertainment and event technology solutions with clients in the television / film, Broadway, sports, gaming, corporate experiential and live events markets, recently announced a major hire and two promotions.

Chris Corrin has joined the company as CFO, heading a newly reorganized financial leadership team. He will lead efforts

including raising capital, directing investor relations, managing financial performance, developing long-term strategy, and providing financial planning and analysis. Corrin's corporate resume includes a 10-year tenure as CFO at **Brink's** as well as the publicly traded **Brink's Group**. Following that, he was CFO at **Edison Learning**, where he was vital to a successful turnaround. His other experience includes senior financial roles at **ITT Corp.**, **Akzo Nobel**, **Chiquita Brands** and **Ernst & Young**.

Within PRG's new financial leadership team, **Joseph T. Cirillo** has taken on a central role of senior vice president, finance, reporting to Corrin. Since Cirillo joined PRG in August 2016, he has worked with PRG's leadership team on the company's financial operations and acquisitions.

Additionally, **Daniel Mollicone** will round out the team as vice president of financial planning and analysis with global responsibility. Mollicone will play an essential role in providing information that guides decision-making and strategy for both corporate leadership and market groups. He has been with PRG for 10 years, most recently as director of finance, EMEA.

**Corrin****Cirillo****Mollicone**

Ken Traina has been tapped as COO of Carlstadt, New Jersey-based **H. Betti Industries, Inc.** Bringing more than 20 years of experience in operations management to the company, Traina, supporting both **Betson Enterprises** and **Imperial**, oversees operations across various areas of the company — including the supply chain, sourcing, warehousing, distribution, information technology and human resources. He also is responsible for developing and maintaining key customer relationships as well as the identification and implementation of all relevant revenue growth opportunities. Previously, Traina spent 11 years at **Hartz Mountain Corp.**, where he most recently served as vice president of supply chain operations.

**Traina**

The **Florida Federation of Fairs and Livestock Shows** in Jacksonville has named **Daniel West** its new executive director. West, a graduate of the **University of Florida** with a degree in agronomy and agriculture extension education, has managed the **Manatee County Fair** since 2003. He has served as a director of the **Manatee County Farm Bureau** since 1998 and on the **Florida Farm Bureau Federation State Board** since 2014. In 2005, West became a member of the Florida Federation of Fairs board of directors and served as the organization's president in 2012. He was inducted into the Florida Federation of Fairs Hall of Fame this year.

**West****Customer service shines in Las Vegas**

Eight employees of the Neon Museum were recognized for customer service excellence by the Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce on Aug. 21. Shown are (back row, flanked by showgirls, from left) Tina Romero, Gabriela Esteban, Carla Kindregan and Tiffany Hargrove; (front row, from left) Daniel Owen, Tyler Tingey and Harrison Langford. (Not pictured: Karla Lagunas.)
COURTESY NEON MUSEUM

OBITUARIES**Carmen M. Cesari, park eatery manager**

DANVILLE, Pa.— Carmen M. "Chuck" Cesari, former manager of The Alamo restaurant and other food operations at Knoebels Amusement Resort in Elysburg, passed away Sept. 25. He was 80.

Born March 1, 1939, in Ashland, Pennsylvania, Cesari graduated from Kulpmont High School in 1957. He served four years in the U.S. Coast Guard.

**Cesari**

Cesari worked with his father on a coal truck and with one of his brothers on a garbage pickup route. In the 1960s, he played in local bands and worked as a band booking agent, booking the Monday night dances at Knoebels. He also was a branch manager for Central Pennsylvania Savings Assn. for 20 years.

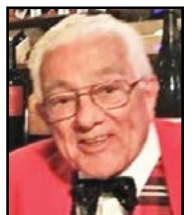
His Knoebels connection led to his operation of Cesari's Pizza and management of The Alamo and surrounding stands at the park. More recently, he ordered food for Knoebels's catering operation.

Cesari is survived by his wife, Donna; daughter, Angela Martini; and son-in-law, James Martini; plus two brothers and one sister.

John C. Evans, chair Gold Medal Products

COCOA BEACH, Fla. — Concession industry pioneer John C. Evans, better known as J.C., died Sept. 6. He was 88.

Evans was born in the Cincinnati area and grew up in the family business, Gold Medal Products Co. After graduating from the University of Cincinnati in 1954, he served two years in the U.S. Army. He then returned to Gold Medal, where he succeeded in sales and eventually became chairman.

**Evans**

Gold Medal saw years of innovation and profitability under Evans, who developed relationships through his involvement with National Assn. of Concessionaires, OABA, IAAPA and the Gibtown Showmen's Club.

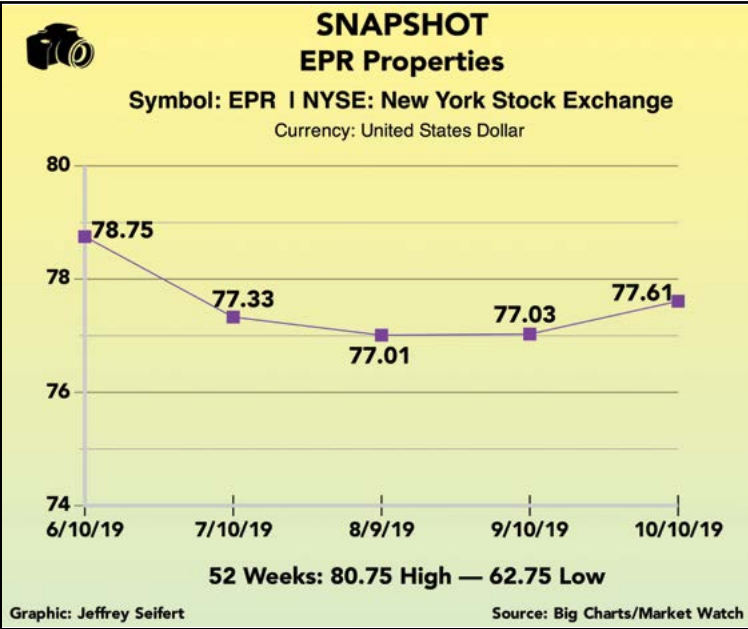
Evans is survived by children John Evans, Leigh Gibson and Suzanne Lipps. He was preceded in death by his wife, Barbara, and son, Douglas.

MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 10/10/19	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	46.51	55.17	26.88
Merlin Entertainments Group / Legoland	UK:MERL	LSE	453.00	460.70	304.40
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	58.65	64.86	45.58
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	44.50	47.27	32.61
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	129.34	147.15	100.35
Dubai Parks & Resorts	DXBE:UH	DFM	0.20	0.38	0.17
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	77.61	80.75	62.75
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	4565.00	4830.00	2855.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	1.13	1.86	1.02
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	7.60	8.53	5.45
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	27.43	31.68	21.61
Parques Reunidos Servicios Centrales S.A.	ES:PQR	MCE	13.70	14.46	9.84
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	103.61	131.04	89.48
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	928.00	2160.00	837.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	25.84	34.72	21.36
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	50.35	69.45	46.68
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	650.00	710.00	598.00
Village Roadshow	AU:VRL	ASX	2.81	3.9	2.10

STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED

Worldwide Markets: ASX, Australian Securities Exchange; CSE, Copenhagen Stock Exchange; LSE, London Stock Exchange; NYSE, New York Stock Exchange; NASDAQ, National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; SEHK, Hong Kong Stock Exchange; SZSE, Shenzhen Stock Exchange; TSEC, Taiwan Stock Exchange, Corp.; TYO/TSE, Tokyo Stock Exchange —SOURCES: Bloomberg.com; Wall Street Journal



DIESEL PRICES		
Region (U.S.)	As of 10/07/19	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$3.041	-\$0.319
Midwest	\$2.967	-\$0.384
Gulf Coast	\$2.804	-\$0.365
Mountain	\$3.022	-\$0.368
West Coast	\$3.215	-\$0.343
California	\$3.981	-\$0.130

CURRENCY	
On 10/11/19 \$1 USD =	
0.9084	EURO
0.8127	GBP (British Pound)
107.64	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9945	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.4802	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3303	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

BUSINESS WATCH

Cedar Fair revenues rise through Labor Day

SANDUSKY, Ohio — **Cedar Fair Entertainment Co.** (NYSE: FUN) reported that year-to-date preliminary net revenues through Sept. 1 increased 8%, or \$86 million, to a record \$1.12 billion compared with \$1.03 billion for the same period last year. Performance was driven by a 1.1 million-visit, or 6%, increase in attendance to 21.0 million guests; a 3%, or \$1.24, increase in in-park per capita spending to \$48.79; and a \$10 million, or 9%, increase in out-of-park revenues to \$130 million. On a same-park basis (excluding two **Schlitterbahn** water parks acquired in July), year-to-date preliminary net revenues totaled a record \$1.08 billion, up \$48 million on a 2% increase in attendance; a 2%, or \$1.08, increase in in-park per capita spending; and a 5% increase in out-of-park revenues.

Great Wolf headed to Blackstone in \$2.9B deal

NEW YORK — As *Amusement Today* went to press, **Centerbridge Partners**, owner of Chicago-based **Great Wolf Resorts, Inc.**, was reported to be nearing a \$2.9 billion sale of the **Great Wolf Lodge** indoor water park resort chain to private investment firm **The Blackstone Group, Inc.** Blackstone has done well with attractions industry acquisitions recently, tripling its investment in **SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.**, during seven years of ownership; earlier this year, the firm was part of a \$6.1 billion deal to take **Merlin Entertainments**, owner of **Legoland** theme parks and **Madame Tussauds**, private. Centerbridge has owned Great Wolf since 2015.

Triotech, CL Corp partner in media-based fun

MONTREAL — **Triotech** and Le Rheu, France-based **CL Corp** have formed a partnership in which they will share global resources and bring a range of products and services to the theme park and location-based entertainment industries. With this move, CL Corp gains access to Triotech's interactive attractions technology and in-house animation studio, and it will also be able to leverage Triotech's production facility and 200 employees in Canada and Beijing, China. Triotech, in turn, gains access to CL Corp's expertise in platform motion, pneumatics, special effects and virtual reality. Each company has 20 years of experience in the design and deployment of rides and attractions for amusement parks, family entertainment centers, museums and zoos.

In brief...

- Las Vegas-based **Caesars Entertainment Corp.** (NASDAQ: CZR) has announced an agreement to sell the **Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino** (Rio) to a company controlled by a principal of **Imperial Companies** of New York for \$516.3 million. Under the agreement, Caesars will continue to operate the property for a minimum of two years and pay annualized rent of \$45 million. Among the independently operated attractions at the Rio are **Kiss by Monster Mini Golf** and **VooDoo Zipline**.
- Following a **Supreme Court of California** ruling in September, animal rights activists are permitted to hold protests in the parking lot and walkways outside **Six Flags Discovery Kingdom** in Vallejo, leaving intact a lower-court ruling that the privately-owned areas are a "public forum for expressive activity." The park banned protests on its grounds in 2014.
- The **Transportation Security Administration** (TSA), an agency of the **U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security**, has lifted its flight ban on the "thermal detonator"-shaped souvenir **Coca-Cola**-brand bottles sold in the new **Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge** lands at **Disneyland Resort** and **Walt Disney World Resort**. "Because these bottles contain liquids larger than 3.4 ounces (100 milliliters), they should be put in checked baggage or emptied to be brought on as a carry-on item," indicated TSA in an Aug. 28 statement.

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Icon Attractions opens the St. Louis Wheel amid high accolades

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — The last day of September was a big day for many people who boarded the 185-foot-tall **St. Louis Wheel** for the first time.

They had watched as the large observation wheel rose from the historic site of the **St. Louis Union Station** and towered over the old railroad canopy. It definitely has marked the area where a \$187 million redevelopment of that downtown area is taking place.

For residents who rode one of the climate-controlled gondolas and looked over their city including sighting the St. Louis Arch, it was just plain fun.

Eli Stovall, managing partner of **Icon Attractions LLC**, along with **Curtis Parks**, headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida, described the opening as "fantastic." His company was tapped by the developers of the project, **Lodging Hospitality Management (LHM)**, to manage and operate the amusement attractions component of the entertainment complex.

"The opening was fantastic and response to all three new attractions was terrific," Stovall said. "In particular, visitors loved the St. Louis Wheel."

The other attractions that opened the same day were a carousel and an 18-hole miniature golf course.

Stovall was very pleased with guest comments such as "such a fun experience for families or couples or anyone" and "I'm so happy the wheel came to St. Louis. It's exactly the kind of thing we need. Such a fun time. Great experience."

"Overall, a huge success and a great partnership between the partners and the city of St. Lou-

is," Stovall said.

The large entertainment redevelopment project of the St. Louis Union Station property includes now, or will include in the future, amusement attractions, a hotel, the new St. Louis Aquarium set to open at the end of this year, restaurants, an outdoor event space, a lake and a retail component.

The St. Louis Wheel is **Chance Rides'** R60 observation wheel. **Dick Chance** was on hand for the soft opening of the

attraction. He said the opening went off without a hitch and the wheel has been running steadily since. And it looked like it would definitely be a success.

"Visibility was really important to them," Chance said. "And this is very visible from the interstate."

Chance said his company was contacted by Lodging Hospitality Management to manufacture the wheel, which took roughly a year to build and get open.

"We have a very tight foot

print in St. Louis because of the Union Station's historical status," Chance said. "Now it looks like it has always been there."

The St. Louis Wheel has 42 climate-controlled gondolas that can seat six to eight passengers each. It sports 1.6 million LED lights with 16.7 million colors.

Chance Rides manufactured the site's carousel and is supplying LHM with a trackless tram that will bring people from parking lots to the Union Station.

This is not Icon Attractions's

first rodeo. The company also manages the Capital Wheel, Flight Deck and Harbor Carousel at **National Harbor**, a 350-acre development on the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., as well as other regional attractions.

Lodging Hospitality Management was established in 1986. It is an independently owned and operated lodging and hospitality management company. **Bob O'Loughlin** is the chairman and chief operating officer.

•thelouiswheel.com



The new St. Louis Wheel, part of the St. Louis (Missouri) Union Station redevelopment project, sports 1.6 million LED lights with 16.7 million color. COURTESY CHANCE RIDES



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2019 GOLDEN TICKET AWARDS – SILVERWOOD THEME PARK

Hosts Silverwood Theme Park, Rocky Mountain Construction deliver hospitality

Golden Ticket Awards bring industry to Idaho for a spectacular event

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

COEUR D'ALENE and ATHOL, Idaho — On September 6 and 7, close to 300 industry professionals arrived for the Networking Event of the Year: *Amusement Today's* Golden Ticket Awards. The host facility for 2019 was **Silverwood Theme Park**.



"My staff was so excited to meet with people from across the industry. Hearing all the positive feedback from them was special," said **Paul Norton**, general manager, Silverwood Theme Park. "I hope the attendees remember Silverwood as a jewel of a North American theme park. The owner and staff put a lot of love and care into the park. We are so grateful to *Amusement Today* in believing in us to host the event. It was a very special moment for my father."

Networking and social opportunities began the moment attendees arrived. Whether over a round of golf or sharing a drink at the **Coeur d'Alene Resort**, the host hotel, connections were made among friends old and new.

Upon check in, attendees were given a full schedule, event information and a welcome bag filled with all sorts of fun swag and collectables.

The first official gathering was a welcome reception a short drive up the road in the town of Hayden. **Rocky Mountain Construction (RMC)** invited the industry for quite an opening night.

With tours of the facility in operation, festive beverages



Above, the 2019 Golden Ticket Award Winners show off their awards. At right, the Golden Ticket Awards presenters gathered for a group photo.

AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

and fantastic customized food offerings, RMC staged a wonderful evening of social interaction, all set to a fun atmosphere that included a live band, complete with roller coaster footage as a backdrop.

Fred Grubb, owner and president of RMC, received the first Golden Ticket of the weekend as a host facility. *Amusement Today* publisher **Gary Slade** stood alongside Grubb and welcomed everyone to the annual event. The fun followed many hours into the evening.

"We were so impressed with RMC's operations and hospitality! Fred and his team do an amazing job, and it was a special treat to see them doing it up close," said **Clint Novak**, general manager, **Fun-Land of Fredericksburg**.

"The fact that there's a roller coaster manufacturing facility in northern Idaho was the biggest surprise!" said **Tiffany Quilici**, sales and marketing director, **Roaring Springs Waterpark**. "I've lived in south-



ern Idaho my entire life and worked in the amusement industry for the past 20 years, and I had no idea!"

"Sparks were flying and watching the technology and sheer power of the equipment used to slice through metal like a hot knife in butter was indescribable," said **Roland Garcia**, vice president of entertainment, **SeaWorld San Antonio** and 2020's GTA host.

"RMC threw one heck of a party and we had a great time," agreed **Leah Koch**, public relations, **Holiday World**. "What RMC has been doing for the last several years is impressive, and we had a great time touring the facility."

Many people noted the special bar created from recycled wood removed from **Cedar Point's** Mean Streak roller coaster. After transforming the ride into the award-winning **Steel Vengeance** in 2018, RMC

took some wood and crafted the bar used for the evening, which was purposed for use in the **National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives** facility in Plainview, Texas.

"Having people in the industry visit was hopefully a good time for everyone," said **Jake Kilcup**, COO, Rocky Mountain Construction. "Maybe they were surprised with our little bit of paradise. We were glad to be able to show off the area. When the sheriff shows up, that's a true Idaho party!"

Attendees arrived at Silverwood Saturday morning to a busy schedule. A lunchtime reception sponsored by **WhiteWater West** allowed industry guests to tour **Boulder Beach** water park and its beautiful setting.

Following that, numerous opportunities for networking and observing another park's

operations offered great take-aways. A behind-the-scenes culinary tour, a park integration software presentation, a landscaping tour and an in-depth look at the park's **Scarywood** haunt made for a full afternoon.

"The theming and attention to detail throughout was fascinating," said **Nick Paradise**, public relations, **Kennywood**, who participated in the **Scarywood** tour. "I was particularly impressed with their use of a multi-story building to create atmosphere and allow them to keep the haunt up permanently, 'hidden in plain sight' from the public."

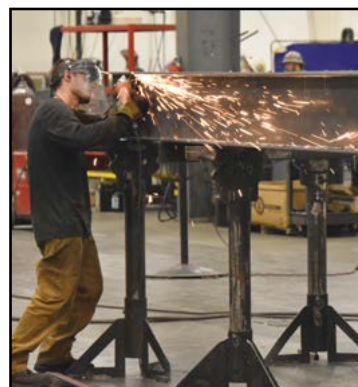
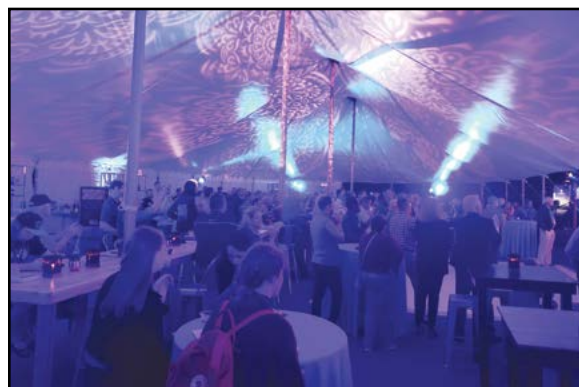
Within the operational interactions, most attendees made a point to hop on a roller coaster or certainly take a ride on the park's original and most signature attraction, the **Silverwood Train**.

"My favorite moment of the weekend was probably the train ride at Silverwood," said **Hunter Novotny**, engineer, **Larson International**. "The natural and staged scenery was all very incredible and cleverly blended into a fun storyline with a great cast."

"Silverwood is beautiful!" said Koch. "I'm already trying to come up with a reason to visit again. It's a lot like **Holiday World** — neither of us should exist based on the lack of major surrounding cities, but we thrive as parks in the 'middle of nowhere.' I was inspired by the ingenuity displayed at Silverwood and their train experience deserves its own Golden Ticket Award category!"

"*Amusement Today* is often thanked for bringing people from the industry to places they would never have visited otherwise," said AT's **Tim Baldwin**, Golden Ticket Awards

► See GTA, page 63



The opening night reception at Rocky Mountain Construction kicked off the event in a fun way. A live band (middle left) kept the RMC party lively. RMC staff (middle right) were on hand to demonstrate the company's fabrication expertise. The Rocky Mountain team received a host Golden Ticket from AT's Gary Slade. AT/TIM BALDWIN; JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

2019 GOLDEN TICKET AWARDS – SILVERWOOD THEME PARK



A luncheon at Silverwood's Boulder Beach (left) began Saturday's activities. Scare actors were brought in for the behind-the-scenes Scarywood tour (middle). A train ride features colorful characters and a stunt show (right) during the journey. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON; TIM BALDWIN

►GTA

Continued from page 62

communications coordinator. "Because of its remote location, Silverwood is certainly in that position. We are thrilled to help bring the industry together and really celebrate the character and heart of all the wonderful parks in this fun business. It's a pleasure to be here."

As evening fell, folks gathered in Silverwood's beautiful catering pavilions. Tables were draped in golden tablecloths specifically for the prestigious event. After delicious courses, **Dippin' Dots** offered a special Golden Ticket ice cream, or attendees could opt for a huckleberry dessert. It was one of many opportunities to try huckleberry something or other while in the region.

"I was surprised by the amount of young people who attended the event and work in the industry. It's very common to have young managers at **Kentucky Kingdom**, so it was comforting to know that this is a trend across the board," said **Carly Uglow**, sales and special events associate.

Once inside the park's main theater, cocktails and celebration were in order. Following engaging entertainment from **Nick Norton**, the park's professional magician, Paul Norton and Slade welcomed everyone to the primary reason for the gathering,

the 2019 Golden Ticket Awards.

The evening was full of laughs, a few surprises, and a well-received fresh take on the Golden Tickets.

"I must confess, I was a bit nervous about being the emcee for the Golden Ticket Awards," said Silverwood Entertainment Manager **Chris Tortora** (in the role of Marshal Jack). "But I was told that the attendees were all like one big, happy family. This was never more apparent than when I made my first flub; I lost my place in the script and announced one of the first winners before the nominees were even mentioned. To my surprise, no one got upset. In fact, everyone had a good laugh about it, and we kept the joke running all night!"

"The privilege of presenting a Golden Ticket for the first time was great," said Novotny. "The AT staff did a great job organizing everything as usual to make it a fun experience. It's a great opportunity for everyone to network in a more relaxed manner than at a trade show and establish good relationships with the people we work with throughout the industry."

"Presenting at the Golden Ticket Awards is a real honor," said **John Hallenbeck**, VP of North American Operations, **IAAPA**. "Each year I look forward to standing with industry colleagues and partners and celebrating their success."



Larson's Hunter Novotny (left) fell prey to Marshal Jack's antics. An ice sculpture (middle) at dinner helped set the stage for the evening, **Dippin' Dots** served up a Golden Ticket flavor (right). AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON; JEFFREY SEIFERT; TIM BALDWIN



Co-presenter **Quilici** agreed: "Presenting the award for Best New Water Ride on behalf of WWA was great fun, especially side-by-side with my IAAPA counterpart. We got to exchange in a little friendly competition over whose ticket sales were higher at the upcoming World Waterpark Association show in Orlando in October versus IAAPA in November!"

Among the 25 categories presented from *Amusement Today*, many new honors were presented this year, some directly from nominations from the amusement industry. AT also recognized four retiring categories in the classification of Legends.

The **AIMS International Safety Award** was presented to **Ron Burback** by board members **Mary Jane Brewer** and **Roger Berry**. (See AT, October 2019) Burback caused a momentary gasp as he lost his foot-

ing on the stairs but delivered a spot-on recovery once at the podium. "Trips and falls are the number one accident in a park" received uproarious applause.

Two surprises took place during the evening to the most unsuspecting of recipients.

In his *Publisher's Picks*, Slade recognized Silverwood Theme Park with the **Turnstile Award**. General Manager Paul Norton took the award to heart, acknowledging his father, **Gary Norton**, for his dedication in building the park. Tortora, visibly moved, was the catalyst for the train ride's reimagining, the focus of the award's crowd-pleasing results.

Slade himself was kept in the dark with a second surprise. **AIMS** presented a **Lifetime Contribution Award** to Slade for his dedication to promoting the industry's safety through his publication and actions over the

past decades.

The men from **Knoebels** are always good for an additional chuckle. On accepting for Best Food, all three gentlemen turned in profile to show their bellies. Upon receiving Best Wooden Coaster for the second year in a row, all three made it to the stage suddenly changed into maintenance outfits.

New winners, an occasional upset and returning champions spoke to the significance of the award and what it meant to each park. The Golden Ticket Awards were established in 1998 to recognize the Best of the Best, and the greatest networking of all comes from sharing best practices and celebration of one's accomplishments.

"Wow! What an experience attending the Golden Ticket Awards! It was a privilege being

► See GTA, page 64



Four parks and attractions were acknowledged as Golden Ticket Legends (left). Silverwood's professional magician provided entertainment (middle). The men of Knoebels Amusement Resort dressed in maintenance wear to accept for Best Wooden Coaster (right). AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON; RICHARD MUNCH

2019 GOLDEN TICKET AWARDS – SILVERWOOD THEME PARK

Future industry leaders honored as Miss And Mr. Golden Tickets

AT: Janice Witherow
GTA Coordinator

A distinguished group of four college students took the stage at the 2019 Golden Ticket Awards, where they were recognized for their service and dedication to the amusement industry.

For the 15th year, *Amusement Today* honored special young employees who plan to pursue a career in the amusement industry and who work for this year's host park – Silverwood Theme Park – as Miss and Mr. Golden Tickets. These individuals exemplify the spirit and integrity of the amusement park industry by promoting the cornerstones of safety, service, courtesy and cleanliness at the highest level, while consistently exceeding job expectations.

This is an annual designation by *Amusement Today*



The Miss and Mr. Golden Tickets for the 2019 Golden Ticket Awards — (l to r): Jesse Egan, Amelia Jimenez, Heidi Llera, and Macy Peterson — pose for a photo after the 2019 ceremonies. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

to promote education in the field of hospitality and amusement, as well as to spotlight future leaders in the amusement industry.

The 2019 class of Miss

and Mr. Golden Tickets assisted with the ceremony by presenting awards to the winning parks; plus each received a complimentary one-year subscription to

Amusement Today and a gift card for school or career supplies. *Amusement Today* applauds the following students:

•**Macy Peterson**, who

is a six-year employee of the park and works in the revenue/front gate department. Peterson attends the **University of Idaho** with a major of international studies.

•**Heidi Llera**, who has been employed at the park for three years and is in the human resources department. Llera attends **North Idaho College**, where she is pursuing interdisciplinary studies.

•**Jesse Egan**, who works in the training department and has been at the park for four seasons. Egan is studying business management at **North Idaho College**.

•**Amelia Jimenez**, who has been employed at the park for one season and is a sales and marketing intern. Jimenez attends **Grand Canyon University**, where she is studying business management.

Faces in the Golden Ticket Awards crowd



AT/RICHARD MUNCH; B. DEREK SHAW; JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

►GTA

Continued from page 63

in the company of passionate individuals throughout our industry, and accepting **Dutch Wonderland's** Golden Ticket for Best Family Park of 2019 was an incredible honor," said **Jeffrey Eisenberg**, director of marketing. "RMC and Silverwood were both wonderful hosts, and I left Idaho feeling inspired by their work, appreciative of the collegiality among attendees, and energized to help Dutch Wonderland continue living up to its new title!"

The Golden Ticket events just keep getting better and better. What a great team effort from AT, and the park choice and settings in Idaho couldn't have been better," commented **Rich Costales**, **Universal Studios Orlando**, taking home three Golden Tickets.

"I think the thing that surprised me the most was how all the attendees seemed to have

the same three traits in common: They were all extremely nice, the best-of-the-best in the industry and surprisingly gracious with their time and compliments," said Tortora. "It was very clear to me these people are in the business for only one reason — making people happy. It was great meeting people from all sides of the industry and sharing information that was helpful. I am positive that we made relationships with parks and companies that will help us continue to grow."

"The Golden Ticket Awards has become an annual tradition and I always look forward to being with so many representatives from the industry," said Hallenbeck. "Everyone comes together to celebrate each other's accomplishments and to have fun. It is always such a great event."

The 2020 Golden Ticket Awards will be hosted by SeaWorld San Antonio and Morgan's Wonderland September 11 and 12.



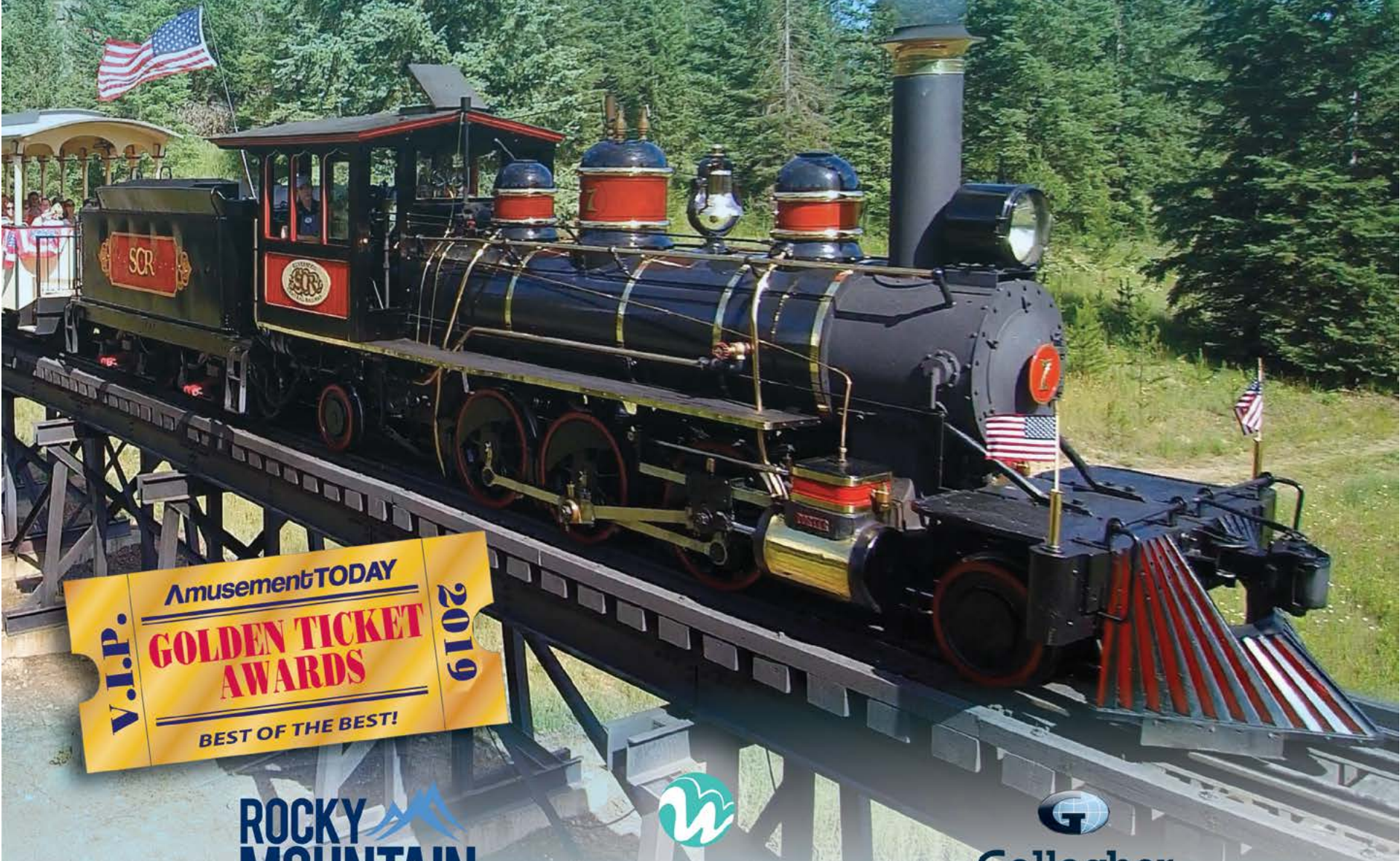
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SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

► Tiny Towne becomes certified driving school — page 70 / Amuse Rides' magnetic go kart — page 72

WhiteWater's Vantage system enhances water park experience

Operational platform makes winning splash at Island H2O Live!

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO — It has been an exciting year for **Vantage**, the subsidiary of Vancouver-based **WhiteWater** introduced at **IAAPA Expo 2018**, and for its eponymous guest engagement and operational optimization platform.

The proprietary system demonstrated its efficiency and value this past summer at **Island H2O Live!**, a new water park in Kissimmee, Florida. The technology helped the state-of-the-art facility score the **Leading Edge Award** at the **39th World Waterpark Assn. Annual Symposium & Trade Show** last month. Also sharing the honor alongside park designer / builder **Aquatic Development Group** were **WhiteWater**, **Innovative Attraction Mgmt.** and **Horizon Waterpark, LLC**.

"We are thrilled that Island H2O Live! is the recipient of a **Leading Edge** award," said **Phil Edgell**, president of **Vantage**. "The team there has worked tirelessly to make this new concept of a water park a reality and is very deserving of this recognition."

At **Island H2O Live!**, where the **Vantage** system has been deployed to its fullest, the technology works through the **Vantage** mobile app, which guests download on their smartphones before they arrive or when they get to the park. Upon arrival, they are given a **Vantage Smart Band** wristband that allows them to utilize the park's technology and engage their social networks through the app.

If guests do not want to use their smartphones, there are kiosks throughout the park where they can tap their **Smart Band** to create their own in-park



In addition to a 24,000-square-foot **WaveTek**-powered wave pool, a giant **LED** screen and kid-friendly slides, **Island H2O Live!**, designed and built by **Aquatic Development Group (ADG)**, features **Vantage** interactive **RFID** technology — benefiting both guests and the operational team. COURTESY ADG

from their phones via **Vantage's** **Operators App** or through their computers with the cloud-based **Operator's Portal**. This scenario, according to the company, creates an additional layer of insight and customization for operators and guests.

The personal tailoring of experiences has become "almost an expectation at theme parks," said **Aaron Mendelson**, **Vantage's** director of customer success and product innovation. "Now we're bringing it to water parks."

Productively 'disruptive'

Vantage grew out of **WhiteWater's** long history of innovation — specifically, its success seven years ago in

bringing gaming technology into its products to enliven guests' experience of the water park environment.

"The guests loved it, and unexpectedly we realized that we were collecting valuable data that would help the park operate the ride more effectively," **Edgell** said.

Vantage was beta-tested at a resort in Orlando before **Island H2O Live!** became the system's first production customer. According to **Edgell**, the 11.5-acre park was the perfect fit for a "disruptive" product like **Vantage**, as one of the ownership's major points of differentiation was to be a technologically advanced facility. Creating a location where guests can share

their day by effortlessly posting to social media has allowed them to both share memories and spread the word about their unique experiences.

"**Vantage** is a holistic park system," **Edgell** said. "Its hardware and software are designed to work in tandem to improve the running of a park while simultaneously elevating guests' experiences. Each side of this equation helps to make the other better in a virtuous circle."

On the hardware side, **Vantage's** **Smart Bands** use a combination of long-range and short-range radio-frequency identification (**RFID**). The short-range functionality allows parks to track guest actions as they tag reading stations placed around the park. From the guests' perspective, it means they can gain access to a ride or see information related to themselves when tapping a station.

The **Vantage** difference is that it also uses long-range **RFID**. This enables a park to capture the passive behavior of guests, including the direction they circulate through the property and where they tend to dwell — and it can even produce "heat maps" of demographic clusters. This is all tracked through a series of readers strategically located in the venue.

► See **VANTAGE**, page 68



Upon entering the park, guests use the **Vantage** wristband with a mobile app and 11 in-park kiosks to tailor their own experiences by checking wait times, locating friends and choosing music playlists to customize attractions. COURTESY WHITEWATER/VANTAGE





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► VANTAGE

Continued from page 67

On the software side, the park-branded mobile app and kiosks placed throughout the park have the same functionality. Here, guests can complete their profiles, choose their music and themes for when they are riding slides, and find their family and friends. They can also earn prize-redeemable points when they ride slides.

The Vantage Operator's App allows real-time attraction performance monitoring. Push notifications alert the operational team to, among other conditions, attractions issues, missing children and long lines. For team members with an office computer setup, the Operator's Portal has all the features of the app plus access to historical data, reporting functionality and a view into all of the park's vendors and departments.

Explained Mendelson: "Vantage tells the operator, for example, how many wristbands went down a ride in the last 10 minutes, along with other information related to ride usage, throughput, staffing and maintenance."

Diagnostic versatility

Vantage was designed with an open architecture to take advantage of systems and products already available on the market as well as ones not yet developed. In this way, the technology functions as an agnostic platform — one that can be programmed to work with virtually any product.

For example, Vantage can use a park's point-of-sale data to show how many hamburgers have been sold over the past month, then overlay customer demographics, weather and attendance for a window into how different aspects of a park are performing and how all facets interconnect. In the process, it merges data silos and illuminates critical park metrics. Such analytics no longer entail the manual process of exporting data and pasting it into spreadsheets.

From attractions and rides to in-park purchases and facilities, the progressive technology provides guests a seamless experience across the park. For operators, the guest insights delivered along with real-time park data empower tactical adjustments and allow for strategic long-term planning.

Edgell said water parks around the world have been expressing interest in Vantage. "We have a pipeline of global opportunities that include Northern Africa, UAE, Asia, and North and South America," he told AT.

• vantage.co



NEWS & NOTES

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Register now for best class selection at worldwide safety seminar

With more than 450 students expected, it's time to sign up for the **2020 AIMS Safety Seminar** and select from more than 200 different class offerings that best fit your needs. Many new and updated classes added this year include hands-on training at **Galveston's Pleasure Pier** and **Schlitterbahn Waterpark**. The 2020 Safety Seminar will be held in Galveston, Texas, January 12-17, 2020.

Tuition is \$645 when you register by December 1, and includes all class materials, two daily snack breaks and lunch each day, plus an opening reception and an evening event at Galveston's Pleasure Pier. Testing and AIMS Certifications offered at the seminar include Maintenance, Operations and Ride Inspection and Aquatics. Attendees can register for added certification in CPO (Certified Pool Operator). Certificates in Security, Aquatics, Leadership, Carnival, FEC and ASTM F770 are also available.



AIMS has secured a discounted hotel rate of **\$115** per night at the **Galveston Hilton** and **\$119** per night at the **San Luis Resort** for all attendees. For those traveling by air, flying in to Houston Hobby airport is recommended. From there, it's an easy drive to Galveston, and there is no charge for parking at the hotel. Shuttle service to and from the airport is also available and should be booked in advance.

A complete schedule and class list along with hotel and other information can be found at www.aimsintl.org. For more information about the AIMS Safety Seminar, please email info@aimsintl.org or contact **Holly Coston**, seminar manager, 714.697.6654

Safety Seminar scholarships are available

IAAPA provides five scholarships to the AIMS Safety Seminar in memory of Alan Ramsay. Application forms can be found at www.aimsintl.org. **OABA** offers four scholarships (one in memory of June Hardin) to OABA members who are first-time Safety Seminar attendees. Contact oaba@oaba.org for more information.

Support the mission of AIMS by becoming a seminar sponsor

AIMS International is a non-profit association and industry support of this important annual Safety Seminar is vital

to the health and prosperity of the entire amusement industry. For information on sponsorship, please contact **Mary Jane Brewer** at 714.425.5747 or email mj.brewer@aimsintl.org.

Silent auction items needed!

The AIMS Silent Auction is one of the highlights of the week during the Safety Seminar.

It gives everyone a chance to bid on all kinds of fun items and helps support AIMS' continuing efforts to upgrade classroom equipment. We're looking for all kinds of amusement industry merchandise such as shirts, bags, hats, etc. Plush and other industry souvenirs to bring home to the kiddos are always popular. Please contact Holly Coston at h.coston@aimsintl.org for information on where to send your items.

Please stop by and visit AIMS International at booth #4527 at the IAAPA Expo!

Space for this AIMS page is provided courtesy of *Amusement Today* as a corporate partner of AIMS Intl. Content is provided by AT & AIMS.



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Georgia's Tiny Towne becomes a certified driving school

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

ATLANTA, Ga. — It's not just any FEC that can boast an official claim of being a certified driving school. With go karts, bumper cars and various driving options out there, Tiny Towne has its own niche.

Opened in 2014, **Tiny Towne** offers a unique, but very specific, experience. Kids — or even adults — can have fun driving through a miniature town but also earn rewards (or penalties) based on their driving skills. The better you drive, the faster your car is able to go. The cars are very sophisticated, and while customers are driving, friendly patrol is also "in town" observing. Run a stop sign? A ticket may cost you some driving points.

CEO and Founder **Pierre Maalouf** is proud of what the facility has accomplished. "We have trained over 30,000 teens without a single incident," he said. "We are giving teens years of experience, confidence and awareness before they start driving in the real world."

The facility starts real-life drivers training at the age of nine. Using a patented appli-



Left, CEO Pierre Maalouf (far right) stands with the first graduating class of drivers receiving their licenses. No matter the age, drivers can hone their skills and test their knowledge in the high-tech facility and fun atmosphere. COURTESY TINY TOWNE

cation, proprietary software, Tiny Towne's Smart cars places learning drivers in a fun environment. It is the view of the facility that people can learn to become safe drivers at a fraction of the cost of a conventional driving school.

Becoming a certified driving school has multiple components. Working with the **Department of Driving Services**, a specific curriculum must be followed and a period of 30 hours of experience (in Georgia, in this case) is required.

"We are able to put drivers behind the wheel with just three and a half minutes with

an instructor," said Maalouf. "A teenager who wants to learn to drive can come to Tiny Towne and in just a few minutes can be behind the wheel and the software and Smart cars do the rest of the work."

The facility has testing areas, often surprising accompanying parents with knowledge they themselves need to bone up on.

"The **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration** did 13 years of research in the 1980s and 1990s to see what was needed to be done to reduce accidents. What they determined was you need to start as

early as possible," said Maalouf. "You have to stretch education over time. We are doing all of this through fun."

Tiny Towne offers specific driving classes just for those wanting to obtain their certified license. This involves three hours of classes and driving time.

When asked by *Amusement Today* if the name Tiny Towne steered teens away, Maalouf didn't find it a major concern as word has reached those seriously seeking licenses. That said, he has obtained the domain name for Traffic Towne if he ever decides a shift would be advantageous. Three other licenses for

additional Tiny Towne properties have been sold but have not opened yet.

"We have found more teenagers are coming than little kids because they realize the value we are giving," he said. "There are very few FECs where you find three-year-olds and kids 13 or 14 playing in the same place. Driving cars for teens and tweens is much more fun than go karts and playing video games. Normally teenagers don't like having little kids [around], but in Tiny Towne, they are all enjoying the driving experience. It's the most advanced driving school in the world."



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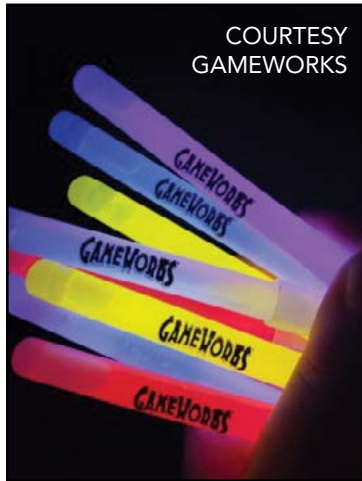
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GameWorks, Inc., makes national glow stick donation

SAN FRANCISCO — GameWorks, Inc., a full entertainment and dining experience with seven locations nationwide, announced it has donated 30,000 glow sticks nationwide to help ensure children's safety during Halloween.

The glow sticks will be distributed throughout the seven markets the company serves, including: Chesapeake, Virginia; Denver, Colorado; Las Vegas, Nevada; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Chicago, Illinois. The recipients span local law enforcement agencies, schools, events and community centers and programs. In turn, these organizations will share the glow sticks with children throughout their local communities.

Each GameWorks venue will give away 500 glow sticks; one to every child with the purchase of a kid's meal from Oct. 16-31.

"At GameWorks, we participate in regular community service events in all of our markets, which engages all GameWorks team members," said **Philip N. Kaplan**, chief executive officer at GameWorks. "We do this through both local and national programs. Our annual glow stick giveaway is yet another example of how much we value our guests and always seek to make a difference in the communities we serve. We designed these glow sticks to ensure easier ability to identify children at night to keep them visible and safe. Now in our second year of glow stick distribution, the local communities in which we operate have come to appreciate this benefit, which we are happy to provide."

•gameworks.com

Freshening-up Fahrenheit

Recently paint crews from Baynum Painting, Inc. were seen at Hersheypark, Hershey, Pennsylvania, working on Fahrenheit, an



Intamin vertical chain roller coaster. This was a full repaint of the columns and track. Baynum also recently completed the third phase of painting of the lift and columns for Great Bear, B&M inverted coaster. Previously, the company painted Stormrunner, an Intamin hydraulic launch coaster in 2014.

AT/B. DEREK SHAW



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Amuse Rides in development stage of magnetic go-kart track

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

COEUR D' ALENE, Idaho. — Just under a dozen miles from downtown Coeur d' Alene, in the bucolic Idaho countryside, is a small oval track for what appears to be a standard go-kart course. Complete with highly banked turns and a tunnel providing two drops, this track upon closer inspection is different — way different. Located right behind the Amuse Rides shop is a test track for their magnetic go-kart that stays on the track, allowing for a fast, yet safer ride experience.

The development of this product through trial and error, has been ongoing the past three years as **Brandon Paul**, president of Amuse Rides explains, "We have been designing and coming up with a new type of go-kart experience that will allow a go-kart to do what they have never been able to do, which is to have some steep bumps (moguls) without the wheels coming off the track, do some extreme banking without the car having any risk of tipping over." Magnets that work with a steel track is the emerging technology being developed by Amuse Rides, for the product they call Magcar. The end result



Brandon Paul, kneeling, is giving Rick Knoebel last minute instructions before he ventures out on the course (above left) as Amuse Rides staff member Aleksandr Kholostov looks on. Earl Heller (middle) of Rides 4 U also took a spin in the prototype Magcar. Numerous industry people tested out the track and car during the 2019 Golden Ticket Awards event. Above right is a view of the inside of the tunnel on the test course (below). AT/B. DEREK SHAW; COURTESY AMUSE RIDES

for the rider is "to feel like they're in control but feel a little bit of an experience of a roller coaster, within a go-kart," said Paul.

The genesis for this idea was the result of a date night comment from wife, Jeana, who challenged her husband to do something in the industry that has never been done before. At the time Paul was looking at another go-kart track that had a pedestrian walkway underneath a hill. That feature provided great airtime; however in doing so, the front wheels left the track causing steering issues for drivers. The facility had to

slow the karts down to minimize any potential safety issues. "I thought if you had a way to still experience that hill going fast and the kart didn't come off the track that would be wonderful." The resulting effort: magnets in a kart that runs on a steel track. "The stronger we made the magnets, the more it would hold. We have come up with a proven standard that will actually work, with the right system."

Magcar is in the final development phase. Those interested may contact the company.

•amuserides.com

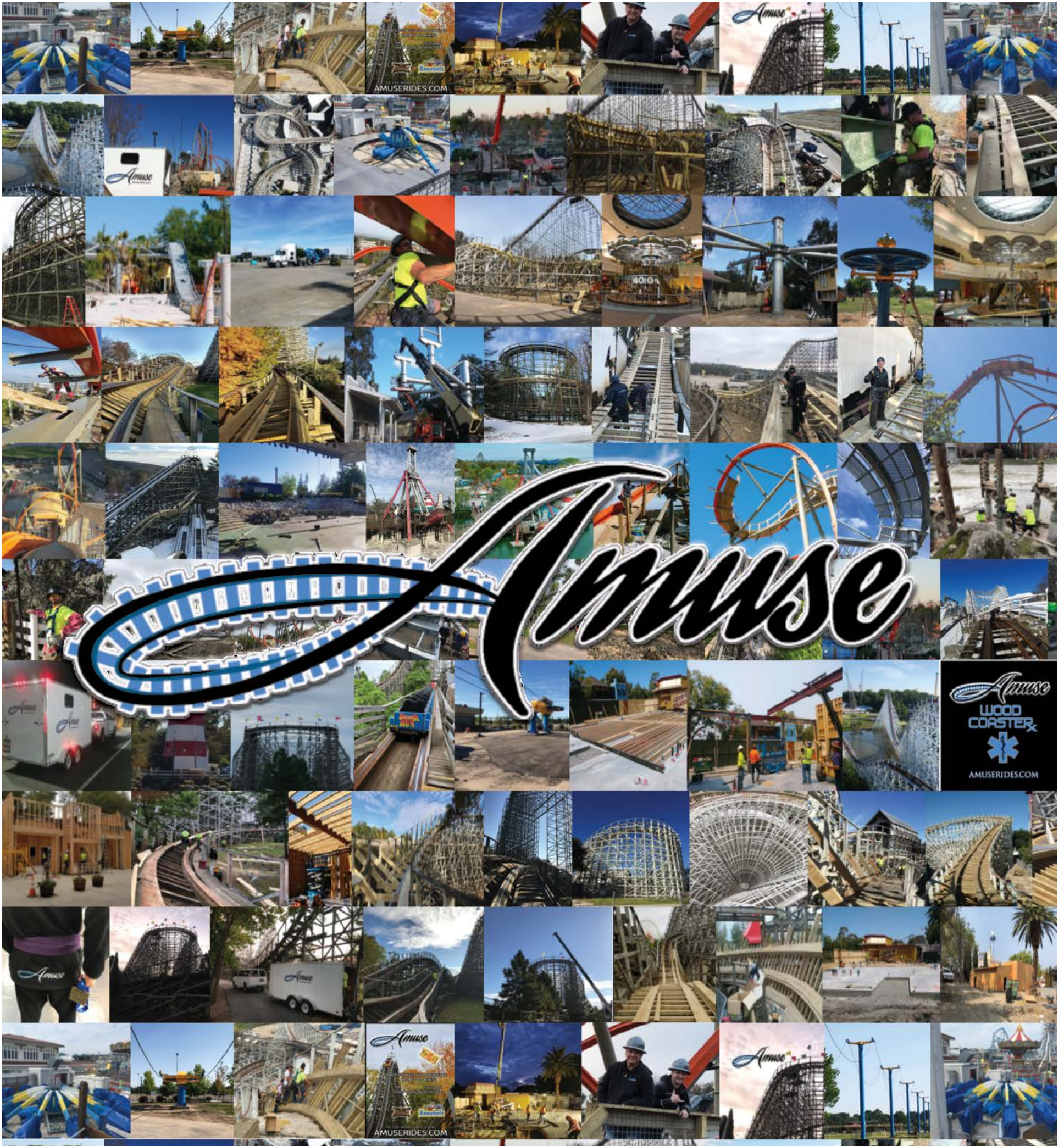


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Nagashima Spa Land, Harman amplify the guest experience

KUWANA, Japan — **Hibino Corporation** outfitted **Nagashima Spa Land** with a state-of-the-art **Harman Professional** audio solutions to upgrade and provide live entertainment experiences for guests.

With more than 50 rides and attractions, Nagashima Spa Land is one of Japan's largest amusement parks, and is one of the 20 most visited amusement parks in the world. As it continues to evolve, the park recently hired audio integrator **Hibino** to enhance its guest experiences with significant upgrades to its existing audio system.

With the park's seaside location, the speakers needed to be able to withstand seawater salt damage as well as wind and rain. After careful consideration, Hibino selected Harman Professional audio solutions to construct a system which would provide the necessary flexibility and allow the park to easily expand its platform in the future.

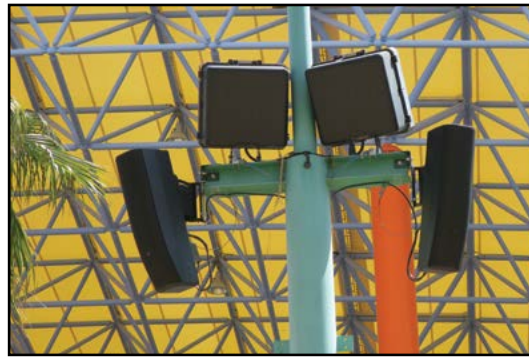
After conducting extensive market research on outdoor-rated loudspeakers, Nagashima Spa Land and Hibino selected JBL Professional AWC82, AWC129 and AWC15LF All-Weather speakers to combat the environmental challenges. The JBL All-Weather Series speakers feature a 14-gauge stainless steel grille, backed with open cell foam and stainless-steel mesh, providing protection in the harshest environments. Hibino placed the JBL AWC speakers throughout the park to deliver background music with optimum wide-angle sound coverage and excellent audio quality with the highest level of weather resistance.

Hibino included JBL Control 25-1 speakers for announcements are to be heard throughout the park. The team also installed highly directional CBT 50LA-1, CBT 70J-1 and CBT 70JE-1 column speakers at the main gate and other attraction entrances to greet guests with powerful music.

The park has seen a severe decrease in complaints from guests that they couldn't hear the announcements. Many guests have complimented the sound quality in surveys.

"It is a privilege to supply robust audio solutions and provide premium sound quality and clarity at Nagashima Spa Land," said **Ramesh Jayaraman**, Harman Professional's vice president & general manager. "We thank Hibino for their exceptional service, replacing the park's outdated sound system with industry-leading audio reinforcement solutions and creating an immersive space."

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Nagashima Spa Land enhanced its guest experiences with significant upgrades from Harman Professional to its existing audio system. COURTESY HARMAN PROFESSIONAL

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Intercard debuts Shindigger

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — **Intercard** has allied with party specialist **Dorothy Lewis**, who contributed to the development of Intercard's Shindigger party planning and reservation software.

During her 20-year tenure as vice-president of marketing at **Fun Station Associates**, Lewis oversaw thousands of parties and events that expanded overall business by as much as 25% at some locations.

Lewis will provide installation and product support for Shindigger, which operators can use with or without an Intercard cashless technology system. She will also offer consulting services on the party and event business at a special discount to Shindigger customers.

"Shindigger subscribers will get a party business pro as a valuable additional resource," says Lewis. "There's so much that Shindigger can do beyond just booking reservations. I will help operators get up to speed and use it to the fullest."

Lewis is a specialist in party planning and operations and has helped dozens of FECs nationwide to improve and expand their party business. She is the co-author (with **Sheryl Bindelglass**) of *The FUNdamentals of the Party Business*, an influential training guide.

"Dorothy Lewis played an important role in making Shindigger a special addition to the Intercard cashless technology platform," says **Scott Sherrod**, CEO of Intercard. "We urge all operators to try it and see how much it can do."

•intercardinc.com



Lewis

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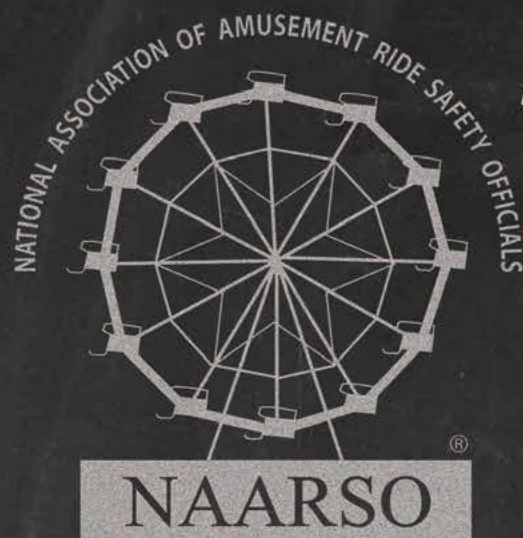
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PortAventura adding solar power



BARCELONA, Spain — PortAventura is planning to install the largest self-consumption solar plant in a European resort, enabling it to derive a third of its energy needs from the sun. The \$6 million project will see the installation of 22,000 solar panels, giving an installed capacity of 8.5 MWp. COURTESY PORTAVENTURA

Improved ride and show analytics from Hitachi Vantara, Disney alliance

LAS VEGAS — During NEXT 2019, Hitachi Vantara, a subsidiary of Hitachi, Ltd., announced a new strategic alliance with Disney Parks, Experiences and Products to help advance Disney's theme park innovations.

Hitachi Vantara is now the official ride and show analytics provider of the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida and the Disneyland Resort in

California to help create intelligent, data-driven solutions that will enhance the operational efficiency of shows and attractions. The teams are deploying industrial internet-of-things technologies (IIoT) that build on Disney's legacy of bringing immersive storytelling experiences to life through the magic of technology.

The solutions use DataOps, a methodology for collaborative data management that helps organizations use data and analytics to derive real-time insights to transform their operations. Additionally, Hitachi's Lumada data management, analytics and IoT software collects and analyzes data to provide real-time insights into park operations. The solutions include predictive capabilities and digital twins, virtual software models that represent physical objects and help organizations understand and optimize performance.

"Walt Disney World Resort and Disneyland Resort have delighted their guests with one-of-a-kind experiences for decades," said **Brian Householder**, chief executive officer, Hitachi Vantara. "We are thrilled to work with Disney to provide intelligent, data-driven solutions that allow Disney to continue its legacy of delivering immersive experiences with increased operational efficiency."

Intertwining storytelling and technologies, Disney and Hitachi have already deployed a suite of solutions across multiple attractions at Walt Disney World Resort, including Toy Story Land attractions Slinky Dog Dash, Toy Story Mania, and Alien Swirling Saucers at Disney's Hollywood Studios.

"From the very beginning, Disney Parks have been an example of how innovation and incredible stories and characters can come together to create something truly special. Working with Hitachi Vantara and its portfolio of data-driven technologies, we can continue to take our guests on unbelievable adventures delivering consistently outstanding experiences for every guest, every time," said **Trevor Larsen**, executive vice president, facilities & operations services for Disney Parks, Experiences and Products.

•hitachi.com

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- Proficient computer user skills including MS Office and smartphones.
- Good organizational and time management skills.
- Willingness to travel up to 50% of the time with office based in Glen Burnie (MD).

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